

VOLUME II

Khippam Vayama- Strive earnestly

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS THEMES IN THE **LIFE OF FL WOODWARD.**

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VOLUME II

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WOODWARD & MAHINDA COLLEGE.

To know how good men live their lives
Can set us free.....¹

Woodward arrived by boat at the ancient Galle dock in the early morning of the first of August 1903, the same day his predecessor and founder of the school, Bowles Daly had begun his work in 1892.² He stepped ashore on the jetty which was decorated for the occasion, a tall man (for the time) of about six feet, lean, weighing not much more than the 11st9^{lb} (74kg) he weighed at university³. He had soft, sensitive features and hair parted in the middle in the Theosophical fashion.⁴

He stepped forward to be greeted by representatives of the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society - Gate Mudaliyar E.R Gunaratna, Muhandiram Thomas de Silva Amarasuriya, Muhandiram F.A Wickramasinghe - and the acting Principal, Sagaris de Silva and staff.⁵ These were personages of importance, with elevated 'native' titles and social prestige in the Southern Provinces: Muhandiram Thomas de Silva Amarasuriya, prominent *Karava* planter, school benefactor and financial manager, who had formed his wealth as an arrack renter⁶; E.R Gunaratna, Mudaliyar of the Governor's Gate, a westernised *Goyigama* Anglophile, who was

¹ From the *Commentary on Samyutta Nikaya*, I, 16.) cited in Woodward, FL *Buddhist Stories- translated from the Pali* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925) p136.

²Gunewardene (p13) suggests the date was 1891; Vitharana Ms, untitled (Colombo, undated) suggests 1892. The *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.IV #5 of June 1923, p52, mentions the school was opened on March 1st 1892 at 4:30pm which suggests Bowles Daly may have arrived on 1st August 1891 and opened the school in March 1892, thus explaining the discrepancy. I am immensely grateful for Dr Vitharana's help and access to his material.

³ "Annals of the Sidney Sussex Boat Club" (1870-1891) Sidney Sussex College Archives, Cambridge.

⁴ One of Leadbeater's advocated fashions, parting the hair in the middle was supposed to expose the crown *chakra* for spiritual benefit.

⁵Vitharana Ms p18.

nevertheless an early supporter of the Buddhist Revival and nationalist aspiration, as well as a Pali scholar who edited various texts for the Pali Text Society⁷; and, Muhandiram F.A Wickramasinghe, another prominent philanthropist who was later responsible for establishing science laboratories at Mahinda, an innovation at a time when science was still an educational poor relation.

Woodward returned the formal greetings but refused the carriage drawn up for him, a declaration intended to stand him among those he meant to serve and to distance him from imperial practice. It was a conscious, deliberate gesture, and quite significant at a time and place that observed closely the minutiae of colonial status. By associating with ‘natives’, albeit ‘natives’ of substance and status, Woodward telegraphed a statement clearly understood by all, for “thosewho did not seem to be ‘anti-native’, were certainly not quite ‘Europeans’ of the purest water.”⁸ Woodward ignored the nuances of superiority and strode instead, with the accompanying party, the short distance from the jetty to the massive fort gates that today still display the arms of the Dutch East India Company

⁶Roberts, M. “Elite Formation and Elites”, p171.

⁷ He produced for the Pali Text Society, editions of the *Dhatukatha* with Commentary, 1892, the *Pajjamadhu*, 1887, the *Tela-kataha-gatha*, 1884, and the *Vimanavatthu*, 1886. Roberts, M. *Exploring Confrontation- Sri Lanka: Politics, Culture and History* (Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994) p166 and footnote p179, suggests that Gunaratna was a *Goyigama* of the Obeysekere-Bandaranaike clan and that he was Christian, “not Buddhist”. The diaries of ER Gunaratne, edited by PE Peiris *Notes on Some Sinhalese Families* (Colombo: Times of Ceylon, ND) p8 indicates an early “fervent” adherence to Christianity, but his later involvement with the BTS and his association with the PTS, seems to mark a shift in affiliation. The way many notable families moved between the social and religious interstices may well have given the impression of Christian affiliation. Certainly the Bandaranaiques generally adhered to Anglicanism until a shift to Buddhism in accord with nationalist aspiration became opportune.

⁸Ludowyk, E.F.C. *Those Long Afternoons- childhood in colonial Ceylon*. (Colombo: Lake House, 1989). p14. Ludowyk was a distinguished scholar of Burgher (mixed race) descent, very much a people between cultures and very conscious of the pejorative use of the term ‘native’ which was often applied more viciously among indigenous peoples themselves to define nuances of status, behaviour, dress or cultural practice. The adoption of the pejorative use of ‘native’ illustrates the importance of

(VOC). They entered the gates, walked past the shaded park outside the administrative *Kachcheri*⁹ and down Pedlar Street, the narrow lane leading to the Mahinda school house.¹⁰

Mahinda was a name encompassing intentions grander than the modest quarters of the school, for it was the Buddhist Emperor Asoka's son, Mahinda, who is reputed to have first introduced Buddhism to Ceylon, 'bringing the precious gift of *dharma* to Lanka'.¹¹ In contrast, the school that bears his name, at that early stage, stood cheek by jowl with arrack shops and brothels, at the junction of Pedlar and Church Street, two of the busiest of the many narrow lanes of the Fort. It was a dark and cramped building, with no yard or compound, though with an open balcony on the lower floor. There may be an irony in the choice of name Bowles Daly attributed to the school, since in a way these early Theosophists saw themselves as introducing 'Buddhism' again to Ceylon, purified of the 'degeneracy' Olcott and the TS perceived as having entered the religion. And in a sense they were, if not 'reintroducing', then 'recasting' as has been alluded to previously, since their influence profoundly shaped the form of Buddhism that has prevailed in twentieth century Sri Lanka, a role in which Woodward played no small part. For the modern day acolytes that pilgrimage each year to Sri Lanka in search of an 'original' Buddhism there may be something vaguely familiar in the encounter; of a profound Protestant western influence that has preceded them.

language in defining superior/inferior, and the way colonial peoples unconsciously absorb the destructive sub-text of valuation.

⁹ *Kachcheri* is a term for an administrative headquarters introduced from South India when Ceylon was under the British Madras Presidency.

¹⁰ The schoolhouse is now a noisy printery and prior to that was a branch of the Bank of Ceylon. It is difficult to imagine a school located in such cramped, dark, airless conditions.

¹¹ This an oft repeated sentiment encompassing elements of a central myth of Lanka as guardian of the Buddha *dharma* (after the collapse of Buddhism in India) and preserver of its original 'purity'.

When Woodward arrived at the school that first morning a few monks attended the gathering to greet his arrival by chanting customary parts of the *sutras* and afterwards tying short lengths of *pirit mula* (charmed thread) on the wrist of Woodward and the others.¹² Woodward spoke to the assembled guests and students offering them a reminder of their obligations and responsibilities and having established the tenor of his reign as Principal, he set about the business of schoolmaster, not with book work and planning but with a cricket match.

It was still only 8:30am, before the heat of the day, and he again walked with some of the others back through the old gate, past the jetty to the race track outside the Fort with its arched pavilion and white painted posts and rails. There in the middle were the coir cricket mats and the stumps and bails prepared for the annual Mahinda v Dharmaraja match, Dharmaraja being another of Olcott's Buddhist schools, this one established in Kandy several years before Mahinda. Thus in the fashion of Victorian obsession with games, Woodward began his career in Ceylon umpiring a cricket match, "a unique incident in the annals of any school anywhere!"¹³

The repetition and emphasis of this tale of Woodward's arrival in the stories about him in oral discourse indicates its significance, probably because of the undeniable stamp of energy and commitment, but also because of the odd incongruence and non-conformity he exhibited. After all, the position of principal was prestigious and eschewing the carriage drawn up for him and descending to the role of umpire may have

¹² Vitharana Ms p18.

¹³ de Sila, D. "Woodward of Mahinda- the Englishman who was a great educationalist" *Evening Observer* (Sri Lanka) 27 May 1982, p7.

compromised the dignity of the office. That had been part of the problem with the school to that date. There had been a tendency to appoint persons to the position of principal on the basis of caste and social status rather than on ability, and the school had suffered from frequent changes of generally poor leadership.

Bowles Daly had left after one year at the school, discouraged by the poor response of local people. Bowles Daly was originally a journalist who had been a lead writer on the English "Daily Telegraph". Like many Theosophists he also had a political side and, as a fervent Irishman, was attached to Parnell's nationalist movement. He was an outspoken, irascible man and as a journalist was feared for his outbursts of journalistic temper. It was inevitable, given the lethargy of interest in founding the school, that he would return to the brighter lights of the colonial English press and a "local society [that] dreaded his criticism."¹⁴

Bowles Daly was replaced by one Lovegrove who also remained less than a year and then by OA Jayasekera who acted as Principal, as he was to do on a number of occasions, from 1895-1896. Mudaliyar N Balasubramania then took over from 1897-98, before Gordon Douglas assumed the principalship on 28 September 1898. His tenure, too, was short-lived, for he left shortly after to 'take up the robes' (became a monk) in Burma, where he died shortly thereafter. He was replaced by acting principal OA Jayasekera on 1 December 1898, before the principalship was assumed by M. J. Fernando on 1 June 1900. His tenure was similarly short-lived and he was replaced by OA Jayasekera once

¹⁴ de Silva, W.A. "A Cycle of National Progress." Diamond Jubilee 1880-1940 issue of the *Buddhist* Colombo: Buddhist Theosophical Society, 1940 [no pagination]

again on 10 May 1901, before one McDougal took over in 1902, but he too, did not remain for long.¹⁵

The college, by the time Woodward arrived in 1903, was “deteriorating and attendance going down”.¹⁶ The contrast of Woodward’s success with his predecessors was an aspect that was to present problems for Woodward later when resentment among relatives of previously unsuccessful principals criticised his approach and methods.¹⁷ When he commenced, the school had five teachers and 89 students, with an average attendance of about 60. When Olcott visited the school on 5 September 1904 - a little over twelve months later - the enrolment had risen to nearly 250.¹⁸ When Woodward left in 1919 there were over 400 students in regular attendance. It was a substantial effort in building and consolidation that began modestly, with primary grades on the ground floor and secondary grades above, in a cramped and airless building. Woodward’s opinion of his surroundings was made clear in unequivocal Victorian terms. The Fort was “a den of wickedness”, unsuitable in all respects, “especially studying at a street corner with an arrack shop near

¹⁵*MCOBA NEWS: The News Letter of the Mahinda College Old Boys Association* Vol 1 No. 2 August 1996 & Vol. 1 No. 3 December 1996. Also Gunewardene p14. Also “Mahinda College Centenary” *Daily News* of Sri Lanka Thursday 19 March 1992, p20-21. Also *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.IV #5 June 1923, p52. There is some discrepancy with respect to the dates but I have cross referenced them as accurately as possible.

¹⁶Gunewardene, p14.

¹⁷Dr Vitharana, personal conversation. There is a substantial oral tradition surrounding Woodward which has been gathered by those attached to the “Woodwardian tradition” like Dr Vitharana. He believes strongly that Woodward may have reflected adversely on the failure of other principals by his success, and generated powerful critics among these family connections who saw the position as a status acquisition. Woodward’s odd non-conformity would no doubt have exacerbated such resentment.

¹⁸ Vitharana Ms p19.

and houses of ill-fame next-door, and that tea-kiosk a place of gathering of evil-doers!”¹⁹

As with many of Woodward’s comments, it is difficult, in his last remark, to separate wry humour from opinion; he could use Victorian pomposity and high morality in a self-mocking manner. There can be no doubt, though, that he was serious about the unsuitability of the Fort as a place for a school - Galle in 1902 was described as the “most insanitary of Municipal Towns”.²⁰ He sought, from the beginning, an opportunity to realise his vision of a unique institution built in suitable pastoral surroundings.

The Woodward that emerges from this initial contact with his new environment appears as a typical English Victorian schoolmaster and paterfamilias, a persona he adopted but also perceived as faintly absurd and would parody when given the opportunity. His vice-principal, FG Pearce, who later became a senior education official in Ceylon, describes Woodward as an “aristocrat...by temperament”²¹ with a “natural dignity”²². Nevertheless he could,

in polite society, come out suddenly with the most terrifying things,- but put so quaintly and with such obvious goodwill and good humour that they only caused merriment.²³

Pearce described one evening at a party, when the company was about to disperse, Woodward suddenly standing up and saying loudly in oratorical

¹⁹ Vitharana Ms p19. Gunewardene p15.

²⁰ Roberts *Galle as Quiet as Asleep* p199.

²¹ Pearce, F.G “Si Monumentum Requiris Circumspice” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol IV #2 April 1920. p6.

²² Pearce, F.G “Si Monumentum ...”p7.

²³ Pearce, F.G “Si Monumentum.....”p7.

tones, "Let the oldest lady present lead the way!", a gesture violating all the rules and manners of polite colonial society. There was a stunned silence, and then "amid laughter someone took up the challenge as a joke."²⁴

There was about Woodward an engaging, unusual manner as well as a gentle calm and kindness, despite an outward uncompromising austerity, which may well have been as much a shyness and reserve. He had an undoubted capacity to engage children and hold their awe, as one child's remembrance attests. In those early days, when the school was located in the Fort, Woodward lived in Rampart Street within the walls of the Fort in a large house, and at about 8:30am each morning he would walk up Pedlar Street to Mahinda College, past a five year old child who sat every morning on the steps of his house. He had a "very vivid memory" of Woodward dressed all in white - white shoes, white socks, white suit and a white panama hat:

The only colour was supplied by the black bow tie he wore and the black ribbon on his panama- the picture of serenity. As he passed he always gave me an affectionate smile, raised his hat and bade me good morning, while I shot up instinctively to return his salutation.²⁵

It is a remembrance of great ordinariness though it contains immense respect and consideration for a small child, and it is interesting that the writer, reflecting later on this early scene, realised "more than ever that [Woodward] was a saint."²⁶ This is a strange comment which the content

²⁴ Pearce, F.G "Si Monumentum....."p7

²⁵Feadasba "Woodward: Mahinda's Architect" newspaper article 13/8/67 (SLNA Packet 14148 *Times of Ceylon Biography*.)

²⁶Feadasba "Woodward....".

of the memory does not disclose, yet it is an instinctive apprehension of something indefinably special about Woodward.

The same writer recalled, as an older boy of about ten, climbing with friends up the steep hill where the new Mahinda College was now located some 2½ miles (4km) from the Fort, and encountering Woodward on the verandah of the principal's quarters talking with the young Henry Woodward Amarasuriya. Woodward noticed the children and climbed down the stairs to find the purpose of their presence. They confessed their curiosity about construction on the site and Woodward took time to explain what was planned and to show them around. In the Olcott Hall, the large airy main school building,

we gazed with wonder at the floor where old plates had been broken up and worked into concrete to form the school crest. He paused to give us a dissertation on the school's motto and design. This was the school principal yet so genuinely humble. When we left after thanking him we were greatly impressed by the character of this high-souled man.²⁷

The symbolism of the school crest and motto worked into a tessellated pattern at the entrance of the Olcott Hall, that the young visitors found so intriguing, was primarily Theosophical. The school colours of black and gold, represented in the intersecting triangles that formed the six pointed star of the crest, were to Woodward a marriage of western and eastern learning: black the colour of western academic robes; yellow the colour of eastern monastic robes.²⁸

²⁷Feadasba "Woodward.....". The tessellated crest remains today in good order though much faded, at the entrance to Olcott Hall, having been stepped on by thousands of students over the years.

²⁸Vitharana MS p23.

The star design - commonly known as 'the Star of David' because of its Jewish association - is derived from hermetic and kabbalistic traditions inflected with Theosophical interpretation, and is, in fact, a central motif in the logo of the Theosophical Society itself. The intersecting triangles that form the star, Woodward suggested, represent the joining of Spirit Δ and Matter ∇ , the "manifestation of a Universe - Spirit and Matter are eternal....This universe is a spark, the resistance of matter to spirit" but it is a spark that is the foundation of perfected flow of action and reaction. The crest represented therefore "the Symbol of perfected action",²⁹ in more prosaic terms, a life of practical endeavour infused with spiritual motivation, very much the preoccupation of the nineteenth century thinking person (and probably the underlying, nagging desire of many through time).

The school motto, which Woodward substituted for an earlier Latin motto devised by Bowles Daly, has a much simpler derivation, a verse from the *Dhammapada* in Pali, *Khippam Vayama, Pandito Bhava*- "Strive earnestly and be wise". The motto is as much pure Victorian as it is pure Pali and is yet another example of how western Buddhists like Woodward, applying the analogy of Prothero, adopted the 'vocabulary' of indigenous culture while retaining the 'grammar' of their Victorian values and inclinations. And it is also very much a statement about Woodward himself, a man who strove earnestly and desired esoteric wisdom like thirst.

²⁹Vitharana MS p24; Gunewardene p38. The explanation is an abbreviated form of a much more convoluted explanation redolent with Theosophic symbolism. The above represents an adequate summation.

Educational Philosophy and Values.

What emerges about Woodward, over and again, is a man able to invite children into a relationship of respect and equality while inspiring their interest in knowledge and understanding. He was, as an ex-pupil and later Principal of the school described, never “in the least patronising, or on the other hand flattering, [and] he made one feel at ease at once with him”.³⁰ This encompassing approach to pupils, and commitment to teaching owes as much to his Victorian origins as it does to his Buddhist and Theosophical values. As has been suggested, the influence of Barnard and the Stamford experience is discernible, but it is nevertheless an influence emanating from within the evolution of the nineteenth century Public School.

Woodward was inclined to be both progressive and cautious, which seems at odds with the overwhelming conservatism of the English Public School. However, despite the reputation of the English Public School as a refuge for elite, conservative values, innovation in English education dates from the reforms of Arnold, from 1828-1842, at Rugby, the archetypical model of Public School education. The example of Rugby was emulated elsewhere during this era of ‘great headmasters’ and the Public School model, which, for Woodward was historically relatively recent, could be regarded as ‘modern’ and even somewhat experimental. Woodward though, was no apologist for the Public School system and once wrote, when describing the regimented boarding-school type education of ancient Sparta to his students - an interesting comparison -

³⁰Transcript of a Radio Broadcast by Mr E.A Wijesooriya, Principal at the time, 20/6/1952.

that “here were found all the defects of the English public school,”³¹ which implies volumes.

Arnold’s reforms were significantly social, providing the foundation for expanded inclusion of the growing middle class, and education of ‘gentlemen’, a new species designed for dedicated service to the Empire: the BTS Buddhist schools in Ceylon tracked an odd parallel, inspired with similar class and national interest intentions. Arnold’s reforms, too, were as much structural as educational, and while he brought respect to the role of educationalist and dedication to the task of shaping minds, his structural innovations, like the prefect system, for example, were more about control of the unruly and the “rugged chaos”³² that previously existed in the Public Schools, than idealist notions of a school community. Schools were still instruments of torture for many and Woodward was not interested in the barbarities of punishment and control, but in moulding minds and actions by example and exhortation to reach for ideals higher than self, though he was nonetheless autocratic and not averse to the use of the sharp end of his tongue. Woodward, however, placed great insistence,

upon the importance of greater concentration in, and sympathy between, teacher and pupil alike, drawing attention to the lack of

³¹ Woodward, FL “An Outline of Greek Education” *The Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. IV No. & December 1926, p2

³² Kitson Clark G. *The Making of Victorian England* (London: Methuen, 1970) p 268.

There is a wealth of fascinating literature on nineteenth century education and the Public School:

See, Honey, JR. *Tom Brown’s Universe* (London: 1977)

Bamford, TW. *The Rise of the Public Schools* (London: Nelson, 1967)

Mack, EC. *Public Schools and British Opinion* (London: 1941)

that thoroughness which was peculiar to the old schooling, and which is now out of fashion...³³

This emphasis on the pupil/teacher relationship marked a central theme of his educational philosophy which he was inclined to describe as a 'yogic' educational method, in the true sense of 'yoga', meaning 'union or 'harmony', rather than contortionist practices. Recognising the inattention of children, the role was to join and direct the self to an object, strengthening and developing the faculties towards an "expansion of consciousness". Despite this New Age vocabulary, the sub-text was nonetheless conservative; he believed that the "old thoroughness, however one sided...has given way to the superficial excursions of to-day..... [and]an age of wild experiments has set in."³⁴

He had seen, as an educationalist, a move from few books and resources, and reliance on personal initiative and concentrated learning, to a

period of annotated text-books, 'helps to learning' and wishy-washy 'selections'. The same barrenness is to be observed in the present-day craze for 'handy reprints', 'hundred best authors', 'hundred best painters', and the like, books sold by the yard in tasteful bindings and 'suitable for presents'. We are losing our powers of concentration and 'one-pointedness'.³⁵

If Woodward viewed the problem as difficult in 1907, he would probably despair today. The late nineteenth century explosion in middle class reading and learning which spawned the cult of potted erudition has given way to an even more superficial educational milieu that insists on what Woodward, quoting James in *Talks on Psychology*, called "soft

³³ Woodward, FL "Some Educational Aims and Methods" *Ceylon National Review* #3 January 1907, p261.

³⁴ Woodward, FL. "Some Educational Aims and Methods" p260.

pedagogics”, an ease and enjoyment for the pupils at what he would see as the cost of learning. Woodward assumed the now unfashionable point of view that a plethora of new ‘relevant’ subjects crowding the curricula, turn out “barren machine-made products with no idea of concentrating [their] energies for five minutes,.... or getting below the surface of any object of study!”³⁶

This issue of concentration was essential, for ‘one pointedness’ of mind is “the indispensable preliminary to knowledge, wisdom, bliss,mind having been duly formed, caught, broken in and dropped, forever, we are free.” This very Buddhist point of view which observes that the inability to concentrate makes people “bewildered and sorrow-stricken by the ‘wandering lunatic mind’,” is important philosophically and is essential to Woodward’s view of education.

Try to hold a child’s attention on a point and you will find the feat impossible, unless you continually keep bringing it back to contemplate the point leading up to it again and again with pleasing, interesting kindred subjects; hammering away all round the centre and incessantly returning to that centre is the secret of teaching. The child forgets itself and its surroundings and is absorbed by the interest aroused.

It follows that the teacher must also be ‘one-pointed’, of wide-reaching interests, sympathetic, and compelling attention. No mere book-learned pedant or casual place-filler can do this work.³⁷

Woodward was frequently described as a person of the ‘*guru* tradition’, a term used generally to describe a ‘teacher’ but which derives from the Sanskrit word meaning ‘heavy’, implying a weighty, serious engagement.

³⁵ Woodward, FL. “Some Educational Aims and Methods” p260.

³⁶ Woodward, FL. “Some Educational Aims and Methods” p261.

³⁷ Woodward, FL. “Some Educational Aims and Methods” p262.

Woodward would find little difficulty embracing such an implied use as he placed particular emphasis on the role of teacher. His mode of his expression, often couched in hierarchical Theosophical terms, sounds odd to the conventional ear, but he believed there were three “planes”³⁸ of teachers whom he described in the following way:

1. The ordinary practical man who looks at the loaves.
2. The one who teaches as above but also teaches and really cares for his pupils as brothers.
3. The other two together with the knowledge that some pupils are bound karmically to him. One who teaches not for this one life but for the whole Kalpa.³⁹

By ‘loaves’ he is applying a short hand to a way of seeing pupils as malleable ‘dough’ to be shaped, moulded and ‘baked’; the instructional mode of teaching. Woodward then advances a ‘modern’ educational view by seeing pupils as participants in a caring, respectful educational milieu, but then goes further to suggest a more intense ‘karmic’ connection with some pupils that endures through the cyclical aeons of time (Kalpas) and rebirths, which adds a timeless purposiveness and otherworldly significance to the role of educator, and a sense of being a part of some unfolding plan, which indeed he believed.

³⁸The concept of ‘planes’ appears in most religious discourse but particularly in Greek and Indian thought, and is much in evidence in Buddhism. It was borrowed and heavily emphasised in Theosophy which was attracted by the resemblance to rigid nineteenth century hierarchical preoccupation. Theosophy proposed 7 planes, each composed of a progressively finer matter and energy unable to be perceived by the usual senses. Only by the development of *siddhis* [spiritual powers] through activation of the *chakras* [the ‘power points’ of the body- crown, forehead, throat, heart and genital area] could these planes be perceived. This TS melange of yogic belief is set out in:-

Besant, A *The Seven Principles of Man* (Adyar, Madras: TPS, 1931).

Besant, A *A Study of Consciousness* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1980).

Leadbeater, CW *Man Visible and Invisible* (Wheaton, Ill.: Quest, 1980.)

Leadbeater, CW *The Astral Plane* (Madras: Vasanta Press, 1984.)

³⁹ Gunewardene p17. “Kalpa” is a term derived from Indian concepts of immense time cycles (Kalpas) of progress and subsequent decline followed by renewal.

These, then, form the central aspects of Woodward's approach to education. Firstly, a sympathetic/empathetic teacher with a capacity to intuitively understand the needs of his pupils. In this Woodward even suggested the use of astrology as an aid to understanding the student's needs. Secondly, to seek, as an aim, not the acquisition of information, but the ability to concentrate, which, in his view, was the path to any further learning, (essentially, self-actuated learning).

This makes the subject of study basically unimportant - any area of scrutiny will do - which explains Woodward, wedded to his own classics education, being quite happy to teach Latin in Ceylon, a milieu culturally remote from the subject's Western origins. Relevance is a secondary consideration; concentration and mastery are central to the acquisition of *samadhi*, 'concentration', one of the three *khandas* of the Eightfold Noble Path.⁴⁰ While it appears a conservative approach, it identifies aspects brushed to one side in most modern educational theory, which sees 'relevance', no matter how much it seems to elude both student and educationalist, as central, and the imposition of concentration as tedious and destructive.

But while Woodward emphasised the necessity for concentration in one's studies, his view of leisure is complementary to his view of educational attainment. As an unrepentant conservative unimpressed by the gadgetry of the modern world, he sees the mechanisation that has created leisure, and the entertainments and diversions that have surged in its wake, as, paradoxically, producing not rest, but restlessness of mind, summed in a verse from the Dhammapada:-

The fugitive, flickering mind,
 Hard to guard and hard to bind.
 They who subdue their mind
 Leave all the fetters of Mara behind.⁴¹

For Woodward, real leisure is simply to be able to stop thinking altogether, “just to sit, to muse”, which, paradoxically, requires effort, since it is something most today find impossible without turning to activity. While it is a Buddhist view to see work and leisure as complements to the business of life, the mastery of mind, it is also very Victorian to see leisure as something requiring work and effort, though such a characterisation does not deny merit in such a view.

As a schoolmaster he was stern, yet sensitive, to the needs and interests of his pupils. Despite his authoritative mien, “he disciplined not by corporal punishment but by example”.⁴² In this Woodward followed the liberal values - unusual and radical for that time - espoused by the Theosophical Society, which influenced educational experimenters like Steiner and Montessori. Schools sprang up wherever the TS took root, for example, in the Castlecrag area of Sydney, where Burley Griffin, the architect of Canberra, and his wife resided, and in even in Devonport, Tasmania. Corporal punishment, then a legendary aspect of the schooling Woodward would have experienced at Christ’s Hospital, was something foreign to his nature, as well as contrary to his personal philosophy which he took from the *Dhammapada*:-

All beings fear the rod; all love their life;

⁴⁰ *pañña* (wisdom), *sila* (morality), *samadhi* (concentration)

⁴¹ Vanapala [Woodward] “The Use of Leisure” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol VI. No.6 July 1937, p187. Mara is the Buddhist personification of Evil.

⁴² Weerasinghe, G.D. “A road in memory of F.L. Woodward” *Times of Ceylon* 20/3/70. Elliot Road, where the school was located was renamed ‘Woodward Mawatha’ or ‘road’ in 1970.

Regard them as thyself; strike not nor slay.⁴³

Woodward,

never caned the boys, but.....it was never positively known whether he had abandoned caning for evermore! Everyone knew, too, that his bark was worse, much worse, than his bite, yet no-one cared to get a “blowing up” from the Principal: it was literally a process of being blown up, - brief but devastating.⁴⁴

The opposition to corporal punishment in the school was stated explicitly by Woodward's successor F. Gordon Pearce, who resigned in 1948 as Assistant Permanent Secretary of Education in Ceylon to spend his retirement, firstly in the Krishnamurti inspired Rishi Valley School and later in the “Blue Mountains” experimental communal rural school in Ootacamund, India.⁴⁵

We believe that violence, such as caning, and compulsion by fear.....is not only unnecessary but does not make the child any better.⁴⁶

While educational theory can express laudable intention, its enactment is more indicative of substance, and in Woodward's hands his theories assumed some odd manifestations. As a teacher Woodward concentrated his energies on the upper forms of Mahinda which he took for most

⁴³ Woodward, F.L. “Translation of the Dhammapada” Chapters 9 & 10. *Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* Vol.1 No.1 1920 Colombo: Bastian & Co. p20.

⁴⁴Pearce “Si Monumentum.....” p8.

⁴⁵ Pearce, who became principal from 1921-23, was a man of great sensitivity and described his reasons for leaving administration to return to schooling in the following manner:

“There are two periods of life when one can afford to take risks- at the beginning before one has accumulated responsibilities, and towards the end when one has fulfilled them.

Youth and old age are the right times of life for adventure, and I think some kinds of madness are better for humanity than too much sanity.”

“Mahinda College Centenary” *Daily News* of Sri Lanka Thursday 19 March 1992 p20.

⁴⁶ Pearce, F.G. “Hopes and Achievements. The Present and Future of a Buddhist School” *The Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* Vol.2 No.1 1923. Colombo: Bastian & Co., 1923. p32. Pearce died in Bombay, 13 August 1961. Pearce, like Woodward, remained true to the educational ideals that had moved him as a younger man and gladly welcomed the opportunity of early retirement to return to the educational ‘coal face’ and the enactment of those early ideals.

subjects, except mathematics and Sinhala. He taught in the room below his study and quarters on Mahinda Hill and furnished it with desks and chairs “of the most artistic design”⁴⁷ and hung the walls with fine paintings and maps. He had a small library off the main room containing carefully selected tomes and through the windows one could observe the surrounding hills and, close by, the flower gardens about the building.

Books were a primary love and the collection he left to the rare books section of the University of Tasmania Library contain many fine volumes of great antiquity and value. Obviously the same consideration was not shown by students to whom he loaned books, and he wrote a fable in the *Mahinda College Magazine* of an anthropomorphised book of Bacon’s *Essays*⁴⁸ subject to the indignities of careless borrowers. The story is an obviously pained and probably futile attempt to encourage pupil consideration but it is almost as interesting for the obvious love of books it reveals and the vignettes it provides of his own schooling at Christ’s Hospital.

In his Latin classes, Woodward drew on his undoubted oratorical skills to build images of the grandiloquent Cicero, and to surround his discourse with tales that hooked the imagination of his pupils. As exams approached he invited his pupils to consult the *sortes virgilianae* on his desk, a large antiquated leather-bound volume of Virgil’s *Works*, which the examination candidate would open at random, and, placing his finger blindly on a line of verse, offer an interpretation. The ‘Pontifex

⁴⁷ Anon. “Old Boy”, “My Last Year at Mahinda College” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. IV No. 4 July 1922, p4.

⁴⁸ “Booklover” [Woodward] “A Library Adventure. (Containing the Tragic History of Mr Bacon’s Essays)” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. II No. 3 April 1915, p 4ff.

Maximus', ie Woodward, would then foretell his success or otherwise at the forthcoming exam.

He built around his classes a mixture of fun and fear, for failure to be adequately prepared could lead to a thunderous order to leave the room, only to be greeted at the end of the class by a smiling Woodward coaxing the reluctant pupil to attend more to his work. It was a means of 'wrong-footing' pupils leaving them always in a state of uncertainty, a manipulative means of control, but one that nonetheless tethered them to his expectations and direction. Yet with Woodward, the benign always exceeded the unkind. Whenever he received presents of fruit and such like - which was usual at the beginning of a new Term - he would share them among the Seniors at 'tiffin hour' or use them for concealed attacks on students.

Oranges and plantains [small sweet bananas] sometimes came down from upstairs on the heads of passers-by, who were nevertheless far from resenting the unseen enemy's methods of attack or the kind of missiles he used.⁴⁹

While Woodward's method's were a strange mix of orthodox and the unusual, what obviously made it work, rather than simply remaining 'theory', was the dimension of Woodward's own personality, character and undoubted dedication, for in the end, as Woodward himself recognised, the art of teaching resides in the individual and his personality, not in the science of its application. In this, the continued dedication to his students, even after they left the school, and his personal intensity, were notable aspects of his style and interest. It is this intensity

⁴⁹ Anon. "Old Boy", "My Last Year at Mahinda College", p7.

that stands out about Woodward and explains the manner in which he not only perceived, but sought, pupils with whom he felt “bound karmically”.

While he maintained an active correspondence with his ex-pupils, very little remains extant. Gunewardene derived most of the material for his monograph, *FL Woodward : Out of his Life and Thought*, from letters written to his uncle, Janananda Pandita Gunewardene who became Proctor of the Ceylon Supreme Court, but these letters seem to have largely disappeared.⁵⁰ Some letters from Woodward to Janananda Pandita Gunewardene do exist in the hands of Dr Vitharana of Colombo and these show the kind of interest and affection Woodward retained for favoured ex-students.

Janananda Gunewardene had attended Mahinda and had passed the Cambridge Junior Local Exam but had failed to gain a certificate in the Senior Exam. Woodward had assisted him, first in offering an assistant master’s position at Mahinda,⁵¹ which he left after experiencing difficulty, and later, in attaining a position as assistant master at St Anthony’s school, Kandy. Gunewardene seems to have been somewhat restless and uncertain of his vocation, which tested Woodward’s patience on occasions, yet he nevertheless wrote to his friend Halling,⁵² (who was later to offer Woodward his home at ‘Chartley’ at Rowella, Tasmania when he retired in 1919) to see if he could assist Gunewardene with a post as correspondence clerk in Colombo. He also wrote to his friend, Sir

⁵⁰Neither the Sri Lankan Archives which hold Gunewardene’s papers, nor his wife and family, have any knowledge of the whereabouts of the letters he used. The manner in which the letters in Vitharana’s Collection are numbered by another hand, and the fact that there are many gaps in the sequence, suggest that the Vitharana Collection might in fact be the ‘out-takes’ from the sequence of letters used by Gunewardene in his short work on Woodward.

⁵¹Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 9 October 1909. Vitharana Collection.

⁵²Letter from FL Woodward to Halling 20 January, year unspecified. Vitharana Collection.

Ponnambalam Arunachalam,⁵³ the well known nationalist figure, similarly seeking help in finding a suitable post for Gunewardene in the Ceylon Civil Service.

Through the period 1909 to 1913 Woodward assisted him also with money,⁵⁴ though he often emphasised he genuinely had little to spare.⁵⁵ He also helped with books and tutoring,⁵⁶ in order to help him to sit for the London Matriculation Exam, which Gunewardene passed in 1913⁵⁷ and which later took him into the law.⁵⁸ Woodward's letters to him are usually addressed to him by his nickname 'Epa' but he showed due respect to the desire of the young man to assume a more mature form of address, as he grew older, and wrote to him, "As you wish it, we will throw EPA overboard as it is a 'prohibitive' name and Janananda is positive."⁵⁹ The affirmative charm of Woodward's assent to the change, which avoids any uncomfortable explanation, is typical of his sympathetic manner. Thereafter his letters invariably address his pupil as 'My dear Janananda' and are usually signed 'Yours affectionately, F.L. Woodward', a very paternal, familial form of address in contrast to the

⁵³ Letter from FL Woodward to Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam 4 February, 1912. Vitharana Collection.

⁵⁴ Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 10 January, 1914. Vitharana Collection. "I send a cheque for Rs15/- [about £1/8/1½ in British pounds at the time- a reasonable sum] and hope you will be able get what you want. Let me know if it is not enough."

⁵⁵ Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 15 March, 1914. Vitharana Collection. "Did you get any reply from your brother? If he will not help you I can give you something, perhaps in April. Just now I have no money at all."

⁵⁶ Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 12 January, 1910. Vitharana Collection. "..History...is your weak point. If you ever have time you send me written work from time to time. I shall be engaged next Saturday - but the following Saturday if you come to Galle, bring your new history book. I should like to see it - also the French Reader and English Course." Woodward also frequently corrected his Latin.

⁵⁷ Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 27 January 1914. Vitharana Collection.

⁵⁸ At this time university qualifications could only be obtained through the University of London or through an Indian university. Even the University College of Ceylon, established in the early 1920's remained under the auspices of the University of London.

⁵⁹ Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 2 (?) June, 1912. Vitharana Collection.

usual form of greeting to his friend which would be simply, 'Dear Halling'.

The letters to Gunewardene show a regard for him as a "painstaking student" of "excellent character"⁶⁰ as well as an almost fretful concern for his frequently occurring ill-health - "Get Horlick's Malted Milk and take it twice daily....I have tried it myself and like it....Your chest is evidently weak and you must take care not to catch a fresh cold."⁶¹ However, while generally encouraging, Woodward did not hesitate to reprove him appropriately, in this case, for deserting his teaching post at Mahinda, an action that must have caused him considerable annoyance, though he keeps it in proportion, recognising the immaturity of his ex-pupil.

You do not explain your reasons for leaving. You might have let me know before, instead of keeping me waiting and putting it off. It causes great inconvenience and this vacillation is a very weak spot in your character. If your relatives are to blame in dissuading you from the course you undertook, they must suffer the bad karma which will result to them. I have nothing to say to people who hinder a good work except that they are blinding [?] their own progress. I shall always be glad to hear from you as to your plans and future prospects.

Your sincere friend

FL Woodward.⁶²

He was to write to him some time later when Gunewardene thought of applying for a teaching position in Kandy. Woodward carefully weighed the pro's and con's in lists on either side of the page and then added:

⁶⁰Letter of reference by FL Woodward for JP Gunewardene, 9 October 1909. Vitharana Collection.

⁶¹Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 10 January, 1914. Vitharana Collection.

⁶² Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 5 June, 1909. Vitharana Collection. Some words are difficult to decipher. It is interesting to observe the way Woodward obviously deflects his annoyance on to the family he regards as influential in the decision.

Why did you leave Mahinda College- if you still intend to take up teaching! I understood you found the work uncongenial.

On the whole I think (even supposing you are offered the post) you would repent of it. There is no harm in you applying for further particulars from the head and if he is desirous of trying you...I can write a certificate - tho you must remember I have just written to the D.P.I [Dept of Public Instruction] saying you were not successful as a teacher (as you wished me to say) So I cannot turn around and praise you as being successful. Do you see!⁶³

But Woodward did write a skilfully evasive letter of recommendation [October 1909] which secured him the job at St Anthony's.

His attitude towards pupils is spelled out in a letter of advice to Gunewardene about teaching, suggesting that it is "the duty of a teacher" to be "an intimate friend" and not to be too outspoken when "reproving any pupil", though the more wilful the student "the greater the plainness", which he goes on to illustrate with the response of Master M. (one of the Theosophical 'Masters') who would "often roundly rebuke" Olcott and Blavatsky who were both "wilful" personalities who "made mistakes". He does not, however, advise "a habit of outspokenness without care", because it "will make you enemies". Rather he suggests "Speak the pleasant truth....it oils the wheels and achieves the influence or object you are aiming at".⁶⁴ It is very much the approach Woodward himself adopted and this approach and intense connection with his students is further amplified by another comment of Woodward's:

One of my favourite pupils....has just died. I have felt his suffering all the week and am now relieved and he [too]. His ruler is Venus

⁶³ Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 20 [?] October, 1909. Vitharana Collection.

⁶⁴ Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 13 December, [year unstated]. Vitharana Collection. The emphasis is that of Woodward. This letter is difficult to decipher as parts have faded badly.

(mine also). Venus now in the 12th house (for me) [and] affects all those also who are dear to me.⁶⁵

The recurrence of allusions to Theosophical doctrine and belief occurs frequently and unselfconsciously in his letters and it is clear he made no attempt to disguise his adherence. He also frequently displays his fascination with astrology, an attitude which would not appear out of place in Sri Lanka even today where astrology is respected and where no marriage or important decision would be undertaken without consulting an astrologer.

The attitude and educational philosophy Woodward brought to Mahinda would have been unusual in any context, even one of the present day, though he would no doubt find a place in some New Age niche. How much more unusual it must have appeared, to either eastern *or* western sensibilities, in the imperial context of Ceylon in the early twentieth century? That he has come down to the present as a man of unusual disposition and outlook is not surprising; what is of particular note, however, is that he obviously transcended the particularities of personality and outlook to assume an indefinable distinction greater than the sum of his many parts.

Building a New Mahinda College.

Woodward toiled from 1903 in the cramped quarters of the Fort, even conducting classes in nearby houses,⁶⁶ but in 1907 two events altered the fortunes of the school and, in an odd way, provided opportunities as well. The first event was the death of Col. Olcott, who became ill not long after

⁶⁵ Gunewardene. p37.

⁶⁶ Vitharana Ms p19.

a visit to Galle and Mahinda College in May 1906, and died, at 75, on 17 February 1907, shortly after his return to India. Olcott holds a special place in the minds of Sinhala people; his statue stands today on Olcott Mawatha (Road), prominently outside the Colombo Fort Central Railway as a memorial to his efforts in the Buddhist Revival and, at one time, Olcott Day was celebrated as a public holiday.

Olcott was Woodward's mentor whom he revered and followed, and his death deeply affected Woodward, for in the many incarnations of the Theosophical Society, the Olcott "Buddhist Phase" of the Society was the one with which Woodward was most attuned⁶⁷ and the one to which he adhered to the end of his life. As Croucher accurately suggests, Woodward was a "Theosophist of the old school" which was "already at this time [1903] something of an anachronism",⁶⁸ an accusation Woodward would probably have no difficulty accepting. If one were searching for the legacy of Olcott in Ceylon, it would be most discernible in the work of Woodward, for few pursued the aims and goals of Olcott more assiduously than Woodward.

The second event of significance was the death of Muhandiram Thomas de Silva Amarasuriya Mahendrapala,⁶⁹ (1847-1907) three months after the death of Olcott, on 14 May. Amarasuriya had been the financial and

⁶⁷ The TS had a number of fashionable philosophical phases in which particular enthusiasms held prominent, but not necessarily exclusive, sway. The early Blavatsky/Olcott 'Spiritualist' phase, the Olcott 'Buddhist' phase, the Besant 'Hindu' phase and the Leadbeater 'Liberal Catholic' phase, the last of which was confined largely to Sydney. This, of course, ignores the schisms that involved Judge, Tingley and the American 'church' with its many permutations, or the phase of Blavatsky's European 'exile' from Adyar between the Coulomb controversy and her death.

⁶⁸ Croucher, P. *A History of Buddhism in Australia 1848-1988* Sydney: UNSW Press, 1989. p21. It would certainly appear from all Woodward's extant writing that his notion of Theosophy became fixed at that time and altered little over the remainder of his life.

⁶⁹ "Mahendrapala" is a respectful community sobriquet granted to Amarasuriya meaning "Guardian of Mahinda".

organisational mainstay of the school, keeping it afloat when it threatened to sink, but more than that he was to Woodward, “as a father”⁷⁰ and special friend. The death of Thomas Amarasuriya saw his son Henry (1872-1916) assume the reins of school manager, a role in Sri Lanka seen as more significant, responsible and prestigious than in the West because of its notable philanthropic and social profile. Henry Amarasuriya was as committed, if not more so, than his father to the progress of the school and was an enthusiastic admirer of Woodward, naming his son Henry Woodward Amarasuriya (1904-1981) in public acknowledgment of that admiration. Woodward, who first met Henry on the day he arrived on the Galle dock in 1903, had taken an instant liking to the “genial giant”⁷¹ and frequently holidayed on the family’s Citrus Estate near Galle.⁷²

Henry assumed not only his father’s philanthropic inclinations - each Wednesday the poor of Galle would gather on the green outside the Amarasuriya home in Unavatuna, east of Galle, and receive a few rupees, sufficient to provide bare necessities for a week.⁷³ He obviously inherited his father’s entrepreneurial inclinations as well which did not always endear him to a small community prone to envy. Woodward offers a somewhat candid assessment of Henry which is nonetheless tinged with great affection:

⁷⁰Woodward, FL. “The Late Henry Amarasuriya JP” *The Buddhist* [a Theosophical magazine organ in Ceylon which Woodward edited for a period] Saturday, 7 October 1916, p2. Copies of the *Buddhist* seem only to exist in the British Library which has misplaced them, and some in the YMBA Colombo.

⁷¹Woodward, FL “The Late Henry Amarasuriya JP” p2.

⁷²Most of the 4000 plus acres of land owned by the Amarasuriya family was confiscated during the land resettlement programmes of the Socialist Government in the 1960’s and 1970’s. Few of the family remain in Galle; most, in fact, have settled in Australia.

⁷³Vitharana, V “Henry Woodward Amarasuriya” in Wijeratne, Dantanarayana & Samara-Wickrama [Ed] *A Century of Memories: an anthology celebrating the centenary of Mahinda College*. (Carlingford, NSW: Private Publication, 1995), p53. The large family home was later donated by Henry Woodward Amarasuriya to the state as a Women’s Teaching College.

In character he was solid, imperious and hasty of temperament; a shrewd business-man, simple minded and open-handed; he forgot no slight or injury, but preferred to remember a good turn, was easily pleased, yet easily offended; loyal to his friends, no lover of windy talk, did not meddle in politics, but loved the seclusion of country-life and when duties of business called him to Colombo returned as one escaping from a 'loka' of tortured souls to the freedom of country life.....

In speech he was slow and deliberate, dearly loved a joke, and his hearty laugh would make....windows rattle. In many ways he was like a big boy, loved music and ancient customs.....Yet he would have his own way.....He liked to do things on a large scale, would have a big house, the best of factories, the latest improvements, the best motor car, wished for public recognition and missed high honours owing to these troublous times of late [ie the 1915 Riots].⁷⁴

Woodward's regard for him was supported by the Southern Province Government Agent (GA), Lushington,⁷⁵ who, in recommending Henry Amarasuriya for the title of Muhandiram, which Woodward supported too,⁷⁶ described how, in 1908, Henry had built a village school at Poddala at his own expense and that he managed "6 or 7 schools" run by the BTS as well as contributing to a large number of charitable works, though "all that he does for the good of others is done without ostentation".⁷⁷

⁷⁴Woodward, FL "The Late Henry Amarasuriya JP" *The Buddhist* 7 October 1916. Though not an official obituary, this article was written after the death of Henry Amarasuriya. A 'loka' is a 'world' (including our own) usually on another plane, which may be heavenly, purgatorial or hellish, depending on one's previous life.

⁷⁵The position of Government Agent was, at that time, extremely powerful and answerable only to the Governor. The autobiographical works of Leonard Woolf, who was at one time Assistant Government Agent, Southern Province, gives a vivid picture of power and life style of Government Agent in the period 1905-1912, at the time Woodward lived in Galle.

⁷⁶RG 65/254. SLNA. Letter FL Woodward to the Governor of Ceylon, 31 October, 1909. Woodward wrote a number of letters to the Governor supporting Amarasuriya's case for appointment as Justice of the Peace and Unofficial Police Magistrate.

⁷⁷RG 65/254 (Classified Secret and Confidential- mainly because they contained material pertaining to the 1915 Riots) 15 September 1909 SLNA. The title was not granted at that stage.

This is not to say his reputation was not occasionally assailed. In 1910 the purported rape of a girl, who was little more than twelve and who was supposedly infected with gonorrhoea as a result, was rumoured to involve the “prominent native planter”⁷⁸ Henry Amarasuriya who “the Vederah [native doctor] has been treating....for weeks past”.⁷⁹ Because the Government Agent suspected suppression of evidence, the matter was taken before the Police Magistrate and the girl was examined by the Medical Officer.⁸⁰ Not only was she found not to have gonorrhoea, but she also admitted the person responsible had been a servant and that the act had been consensual. The full facts can never be assured, of course, though there can be no doubt persons of reputation could be subject to scurrilous allegation in such a small community, as the events of 1915 were to prove.

The Riots of 1915, the “troubulous times of late” to which Woodward referred, were substantially inter-communal, arising out of tensions between Sinhala and Moors. They were interpreted as conspiratorial, however, by the police and military who were caught up in the jingoistic and paranoid context of war and who, as a consequence, grossly overreacted. Rioting took place in Galle and Henry Amarasuriya took a creditable lead in defending the Moors and dissuading his Sinhala compatriots.⁸¹ He was, however, summarily arrested and subjected to

⁷⁸RG 43/18 SLNA. 6 February 1910.

⁷⁹RG 43/20 SLNA. 8 February 1910. Henry Amarasuriya was, in fact, being treated by the *vederah* or *vederal* for the manifestations of diabetes, not gonorrhoea. He was to die young at 45 on 25 September 1916 from septicemia, the result of his diabetes. His son Henry Woodward Amarasuriya also exhibited symptoms of diabetes and became blind in his late old age. It is a condition relatively common due to a high starch diet and, probably, genetic propensity.

⁸⁰RG 43/20 SLNA. 12 February 1910.

⁸¹Vitharana Ms p62. During the Riots the Mahinda College Boy Scouts formed a first aid unit and also guarded the China Garden mosque. Their HQ was Henry Amarasuriya's office in Talbot Town which hardly suggests the actions of a man attempting to foment trouble.

what the Attorney-General Anton Bertram described in unequivocal terms as a “humiliating and, I believe, prolonged incarceration”⁸² and the “victim of a false charge” of inflaming rather than attempting to quell the Riots. He dismissed the charges against Amarasuriya without further trial.

The Government Agent, Hellings, wrote to the Executive Council⁸³ strenuously defending Henry Amarasuriya, a courageous stand in the heightened circumstances of the time, which had seen 34 civilians summarily executed under the edicts of martial law. According to Hellings, Henry Amarasuriya was a person of unimpeachable integrity and honour, and states that the only slurs on his name, Hellings had been aware of, were rumours Amarasuriya had been behind an anonymous attempt to bribe a former GA, and some accusations of land encroachment (a common, if illegal practice) which had forced additional payments to the government; beyond these there was nothing.⁸⁴

Henry Amarasuriya was undoubtedly a colourful personality and a man of much determination, but his significance, for Woodward, lies in his

⁸²Executive Council Paper 246/1916 SLNA. Amarasuriya had, in fact, attempted to convince crowds to disperse in the Galle Fort and had defended the Moors against Sinhala extremists, an action GA Hellings very much appreciated, though it led to threats against Henry's life. Hellings sanctioned Amarasuriya carrying a sword for protection, which led to his arrest by plain clothes police after a car chase, and accusations he had contributed to, rather than restrained, the Riots - after all why was he armed and why had he attempted to evade the police? The extraordinarily view of the Brig. General in the Executive Council Paper was that, rather than arrest him, “it would have been even better if [the police] had shot at the car.”....! Bertram's comments barely conceal his contempt for the extreme action of the police and military volunteers (mainly white planters) during the Riots. The actions of the police, military and volunteers [see CO 520 PRO dispatch, Chalmers to Bonar Law] led to protracted controversy, even in England and in the Commons. The extreme response of the authorities was largely a manifestation of war time paranoia and jingoism that exaggerated the threat and drew conspiratorial inferences that were simply not there.

⁸³ RG65/256 Confidential/Secret files inquiring into Henry Amarasuriya after the 1915 Riots. SLNA. The recommendation had been that H. Amarasuriya be stripped of his position as Justice of the Peace, but Helling defended Henry.

“unceasing support”, both moral and financial, “when hardly a single other Buddhist lent a hand in our work”⁸⁵ and Woodward’s vision of a new school. The Board of the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society, who sponsored Mahinda, was made up of men of social standing, planters and businessmen in the main, who were not by nature disposed to sympathise with the visions of a non-conformist like Woodward. In this situation Henry Amarasuriya was pivotal. He was a staunch ally of Woodward and gave him unswerving support, even though he could not stem the undercurrent of carping complaint and criticism that was later to see Pearce⁸⁶ (Principal 1921-23) leave the principalship of Mahinda in a state of considerable distress, and another principal, Mr PR Gunasekera (Principal 1926-1932), who later became High Commissioner to Australia, sue the Board for wrongful dismissal.⁸⁷

The death of Thomas Amarasuriya, in 1907, brought his son Henry, with his energy and enthusiasm, to the helm. The death of Olcott provided a suitable focus, a memorial to the revered reformer, that was to form the cynosure of the new school. With suitable encouragement from Woodward and Henry Amarasuriya, it was decided by the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society to seek funds for an assembly hall for the school, to be named after Olcott, and this in turn, most importantly, placed in train moves to find a suitable location for a new school.

⁸⁴ RG65/256 SLNA. A report by Hellings giving his version of events during the 1915 Riots in Galle, written on 21 March 1916.

⁸⁵ Woodward, FL “The Late Henry Amarasuriya JP”

⁸⁶ Gurugé, Ananda WP. *From the Living Fountains of Buddhism: Sri Lankan Support to Pioneering Western Orientalists* (Colombo: Ministry of Cultural Affairs, 1984.) pp448-453. Letters from Pearce to the Ven. Seelakkandha 7 August 1923. Letters from the SLNA.

⁸⁷ *Ceylon Daily News* Friday 10 May 1935.

Two sites were suggested: one offered by Mudaliyar Wijekularatna of Galvadugoda, near the Galle railway station, a flat marshy area,⁸⁸ and another offered by Mrs D.F. de Silva of 'Nandana' in the Elliot Road (now Woodward Mawatha). Both these donors were of the *Navandanno* or caste of jewellers and goldsmiths which indicates the diversity of caste groups prepared to support the cause of English-medium education, though it also indicates intra-caste rivalry as well.⁸⁹ The Elliot Rd site, near the village of Minuwangoda, was a jungle-covered site called *Devatagahawatta*, located on a ridge with views that extended to the foothills of the Rakvana Range in the east and towards Sri Pada, or Adams Peak, to the north. The area was neglected, however, and had become the haunt of jackals, leopards and cattle thieves who used the area as a clandestine slaughter-house.⁹⁰ Woodward had always been disposed towards a pastoral setting, so the choice was easy. Woodward wrote later:

It is good to be more intimate with nature. It has always been my own aim and now that I am established in the country in a beautiful spot, I have my desire. *Vivere secundum naturam* as the Romans put it, is really an attempt to translate *Dhammena Jitam*, life according to Dhamma,- Natural law- God - Happiness.⁹¹

The choice of site, however, far from a simple selection, was fraught with jealousy and intrigue in a way only village life can produce and which deeply disrupted the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society at the time.

⁸⁸The area is extremely unsuitable. Elliot, who was an early local government surveyor, (and who gave his name to Elliot Road, later changed to Woodward Mawatha), constructed a canal through the area but it is so flat that it does not effectively drain, and today remains an open drain of unbelievable Stygian colour and odour.

⁸⁹ Notes from Dr Vitharana.

⁹⁰Anon. 'Opium' "Gamagewatta at Minuwangoda" *Mahinda College Magazine* October 1920 Vol IV #3, p23. 'Opium' was the nickname of Albert Withanachchi's father. Note also the different spelling of the village.

The two villages vied for selection and the bitter dispute was only settled by the intervention of village women who were less than enthused by the dubious nature of the contest in which their husbands were engaged. The land was purchased by Mrs DF de Silva and offered free to the Galle BTS, which settled the matter for the moment, though when construction began it was realised that the purchase only occupied the western slope (with a boundary running along the ridge) and further land had to be purchased at considerable expense to the Galle BTS in order to secure the whole site.⁹²

On 15 January 1908,⁹³ less than a year after Olcott died, the foundation stone of the Olcott Hall was laid. This had been preceded, about a month before, by the turning of the first sod, but before the ceremony Woodward and two members of the Building Committee had gone to the nearby Malwatte Temple at Dangedara. There, for the first time, Woodward took *pansil* from Seelakkandha Thero, high priest of the Ramana Sect, and formally became a Buddhist.⁹⁴ At the later laying of the foundation stone Woodward formally received the deeds of the land from the ladies of Minuwangoda after the men of the village had poured water from an ornate silver vessel over his hands.

Woodward had raised an amount of nearly Rs10,000/-⁹⁵ towards the building fund in which the contribution of Henry Amarasuriya cannot be underestimated: he dedicated Rs1500/- towards the building of Olcott

⁹¹quoted in Gunewardene p24.

⁹²"Gamagewatta at Minuwangoda" *Mahinda College Magazine* October 1920 Vol IV #3, p24.

⁹³Gunewardene p19. The *Daily News* of Ceylon 27/5/1955 "Englishman who spent his patrimony on Buddhist school" suggests 1907 though Gunewardene and Vitharana agree on 1908.

⁹⁴"Gamagewatta at Minuwangoda" p24.

⁹⁵Gunewardene p19.

Hall, Rs3500/- towards a set of classrooms (named after his father, Thomas) and a further Rs2000/- towards another block.⁹⁶ Woodward contributed personally an additional amount of about Rs8000/-,⁹⁷ and, after his father's death on 25 January 1912,⁹⁸ a further amount from his patrimony, but he would disguise his contributions under the pseudonymous, "F.L. Vanapala" ('protector/guardian of wood/forest'- a rough Sinhala version of his name). He genuinely disliked publicity and had "a good-natured contempt for those who sought it"⁹⁹- only thrice during his time in Ceylon did he ever enter public controversy by writing to the papers, and only then to defend people for whom he had high regard.¹⁰⁰

The extent of Woodward's total financial contribution is difficult to assess with various figures touted, from around Rs20,000/-¹⁰¹ to Rs25,000/-¹⁰² and suggesting this was the entirety of his patrimony,¹⁰³ which considering the terms of his father's Will is probably reasonably accurate.¹⁰⁴ This

⁹⁶RG65/254 (Confidential and Classified files) SLNA. GA Lushington report 15 September 1909. Details of his philanthropy were included in a recommendation of 'native title'.

⁹⁷Gunewardene p 22. Various figures are touted as to Woodward's financial contribution.

⁹⁸Will of Rev. William Woodward, Somerset House. Woodward's father left a considerable estate of £16,537/6/9 of which Woodward's share (after probate) was some £2000 [about R20,000/- at the time]

⁹⁹Transcript of Radio Broadcast by the then Principal E.A Wijesooriya on 20/6/1952.

¹⁰⁰Pearce, F.G "Si Monumentum" p2. The people in question were Olcott, Besant and one Parsons of the Ceylon Civil Service, of whom nothing is known.

¹⁰¹Jayawickrama, M.S. "Remembering a great teacher" 28/5/81 Newspaper article, paper unknown. PKT4579 SLNA.

¹⁰²de Silva, A.B. Dionysis "Woodward - the great Buddhist educationalist" *Ceylon Daily News* 27/5/69. In another newspaper article, "Woodward of Mahinda", [PKT 14148 SLNA] de Silva suggests R25000/- was the whole of Woodward's patrimony.

¹⁰³Croucher p21.

¹⁰⁴The difficulty in accurately assessing Woodward's inheritance is that, while the provisions of his father's Will are known those of his mother are not. She died several years before her husband, who was later buried along side her in Catworth. I made a strenuous search of Somerset House files but could find no record of her Will and the benefit to Woodward, though it is known he received money from her estate at her demise. Because it is possible his mother had benefit from her own family whose means were more substantial than his father's, additional sums may have come to him.

would have been a quite substantial sum given that the Government's annual Grant-in-Aid to the school was only in the order of Rs2500/-.¹⁰⁵ There can be no doubt that Woodward expended, relative to modern times, a staggering amount of his own money and potential salary from the school, on its construction; it is doubtful whether even Woodward knew how much. Nevertheless he was sufficiently prudent to retain adequate funds to purchase in 1926, a half share of "Bhatkawa", in Tasmania, with his friend Frei,¹⁰⁶ and a modest annuity in 1936 for £AUS1000.¹⁰⁷

The school was, however, undoubtedly a project of such singular importance to Woodward, a 'mission' in fact, that he was prepared to impart his entire energies and whatever funds he could expend. It became, between 1908 and 1912, when the school was relocated to its present location, a consuming passion, physically, emotionally and financially.

Woodward's preoccupation with the building of the school is illustrated by an incident where a letter was brought to him while he was with other staff. He opened the letter, read it with care and then, when asked about

Whatever the case, there is no doubt Woodward spent the vast bulk of his inheritance on construction of the school.

¹⁰⁵*Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912. p230. Evidence by Woodward before a Committee investigating education. Total revenue for the school was in the order of Rs12000/- pa, Rs9000/- from fees and Rs2500/- from grant.

¹⁰⁶Frei, a fellow Theosophist, who worked for the old Volkart firm in Ceylon, [see *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.VI Nos. 5&6 June 1936] later became a private secretary to Leadbeater (one of many) at the Manor in Sydney, grandiosely described as the occult centre of the southern hemisphere. While mainly involved, like Woodward's friend Halling, in commerce, he was Chairman of the Board of Musaeus College- a girls school founded by Woodward's fellow Theosophist Mrs Marie Musaeus Higgins in Rosemead Place, Cinnamon Gardens, in Colombo. Frei died while still occupying that position in the 1940's.

See de Siva GC "Message" in *Centenary of Musaeus College 1893-1993* (Colombo: Musaeus College, 1993.)

¹⁰⁷Shield Heritage Woodward file- AMP annuity on file.

the contents, replied that the letter was to inform him of his mother's demise and his share of the estate. After the usual expressions of condolence from others, Woodward brightly pointed out he would now have the means to complete another building project.¹⁰⁸ His composure may seem to have bordered on indifference, but he was a person who, in the Victorian manner, did not divulge his feelings and who would anyway have expressed his grief in private. It also may well have been displacement behaviour to deflect his feelings. He was a person who did not dwell on negatives, but looked to where the future lay.

Mahinda College, as FG Pearce observed, was in "the most literal and material sense.....his monument".¹⁰⁹ He was the architect of buildings that were deliberately planned as "graceful and airy", attuned to the climate and way of life. And he was principal contractor and supervisor of works. As Pearce again observed, "I have seen him trowel in hand, at work with the masons, clambering up the scaffolding, making measurements and superintending operations."¹¹⁰ It was a passionate endeavour that produced a collection of buildings that even today, though often crowded out by less thoughtful additions, are of great charm and coherence.

The foundations of the Olcott Hall, a building 120 feet by 40 feet, at that time the largest hall of its kind on the island, were laid at 2:14pm (such exactitude is important astrologically) on 15 of January 1908 with monks from several temples in the neighbourhood lighting candles at the four

¹⁰⁸ Personal conversation with Albert Withanachchi who visited Woodward's home in Tasmania in 1967.

¹⁰⁹ Pearce, F.G "Si Monumntum....." p2.

¹¹⁰ Pearce "Si Monumentum....." p2.

corners of the proposed building and chanting the *parittas*.¹¹¹ Before the end of the year, foundations were laid for two more buildings and classrooms (July & October). Thereafter began a period of immensely productive activity by Woodward, then in his late thirties. Each day after school he would walk the 4km to the new school building site or travel by single bull hackney (cart), driven by his loyal servant Babun, to superintend construction, and toil among the workers, guiding their efforts.

It took four years for construction of the school to be sufficient for occupation, and it was a period fraught with considerable difficulties. Local enthusiasm waxed and waned and funds frequently ran low, with Woodward often paying “masons and labourers out of his own purse”.¹¹² It was not always easy for people to envisage the scope and size of Woodward’s intention, and that inability sometimes spilled over into scepticism and even ridicule. “I know I am not understood in my aims here by many”,¹¹³ he wrote in 1909, “That they should scoff at work that is the noblest possible and that I regard myself as unsurpassable is to me a mark of ignorance”.¹¹⁴

This last sentence contains the essence of Woodward’s difficulty, an envy and resentment that interpreted Woodward’s confident, single-minded purpose and energy as a sign of arrogant superiority, a resentment easily and understandably roused in the racially sensitive colonial context. The Galle BTS was dominated by cautious, business interests who saw

¹¹¹ Vitharana Ms p 22. *Parittas* are Buddhist chants of protection and well being.

¹¹² Gunewardene p20.

¹¹³ Letter of FL Woodward, 20 June 1909. Cited in Gunewardene p 20.

¹¹⁴ Letter of FL Woodward, 8 June 1909. Cited in Gunewardene p20.

themselves as managing the school's direction. Tension was inevitable as, far from being a 'servant' of the Galle BTS, Woodward was leading it along a path fraught with potential difficulty and financial hazard.

He was not a man of false modesty and could appear, even in humour, to be supremely confident. There were a number of Woodward's contemporaries who were known for their contribution to education and who held prestigious positions in what remain, today, the elite schools of Sri Lanka; Frazer of Trinity, Hartley of Royal, Mrs Higgins of Musaeus and Stone of St Thomas'. Woodward's summation of these reputations was to wryly suggest, in reference to himself and the last named, that, as in the children's game, "All things bow down to wood and stone!"¹¹⁵ This was a clever piece of punning, but it could have been easily misconstrued as arrogance and generated the kind of resentment that, on occasions, Woodward could inspire.

Determination and Conflict.

There can be no doubt that Woodward had strong, unbending views on many issues in contrast to his otherwise equitable demeanour. On the teaching of Sinhala, Woodward was adamant, even though he himself found it "difficult to acquire" and claimed "I do not think I could pass 4th standard myself"¹¹⁶ (though others, like his friend PD Ratnatunga, disagreed with his judgement).¹¹⁷ His views on use of the vernacular were sufficiently forthright to have invitations to the opening of the Olcott hall in 1912 printed in Sinhala, some 44 years before Sinhala became the state

¹¹⁵ Witanachchi, A. "Ashes are Good for Roses" in *A Century of Memories* p64.

¹¹⁶ *Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912, p 227.

¹¹⁷ Ratnatunga, P.D. "Frank Lee Woodward" *The Buddhist* Vol XXIII, No.3 July 1952. (Colombo: YMBA) p50. Ratnatunga, one of Woodward's long standing friends and correspondents, claims Woodward's knowledge of Sinhala was greater than his disclaimer.

language of Sri Lanka.¹¹⁸ He believed boys without knowledge of the vernacular “despised everything connected with their people”¹¹⁹ and seemed “angular” and to “lack something. They are unreal and seem to belong to neither one people nor the other.”¹²⁰ This was an astute, feelingful judgement of imperial impact largely ignored by colonial administrators who saw no danger in devaluation of vernacular and cultural heritage in the acquisition of ‘civilisation’.

Nevertheless, other aspects of his response emulated the administrators he criticised. His was a nationalist position, radical at the time, uncompromising and even autocratic - “I make them do Sinhalese whether their parents like it or not.”¹²¹ When questioned about this attitude before a Legislative Council investigative committee on education, Woodward stated unequivocally, “I never see parents and never pay attention to their wishes on this matter [teaching Sinhala]. I do not think they are capable of expressing an opinion on it.”¹²² This is an extraordinary mix of cultural and national affirmation and patronising, imperialistic ‘I-know-best’, and it is easy to see how he could be seen as arrogant and unbending by local people.

Pearce observed this conservative aspect of Woodward, who could be “downright autocratic” and “no believer in democracy and its methods”.¹²³ As Woodward phrased it, “I am not going to have every vulgar little tinker dictating to *me*!” It was a conservatism (or possibly

¹¹⁸Vitharana, V *Message of Woodward* (Colombo: Mahinda College OBA, 1977.) p8 & 9.

¹¹⁹*Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912, p227.

¹²⁰*Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912, p225.

¹²¹*Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912, p226.

¹²²*Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912, p226.

¹²³Pearce, F “Si Monumentum.....” p7.

indifference) that extended even to his dress sense on formal occasions, where he continued to wear his hair rather long (in contrast to the fashion of the period) and “favoured an unusual kind of collar and tie”,¹²⁴ the high starched collars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In decision making, his attitude could be very disconcerting and resistant to the innovation his young deputy espoused. He was, as Pearce shrewdly observed, “liberal in thought [but] conservative in action.....slow to perform, and slow to change”.¹²⁵ Woodward was dismissive of suggested change, subjecting any proposal to a “wet-blanketting, which was generally fatal”, but if those proposing it were persistent, he would reconsider and, once convinced, would back any proposal with all his influence, and with due acknowledgment to the proponent.

Woodward’s stubborn determination and indifference to the opinion of others was both a source of considerable strength and great vulnerability. He envisaged Mahinda as an institution of substance, status and reputation, and consequently paid his staff better than most civil servants, then a highly desirable, secure form of employment dominated by European expatriates and thus much sought by locals. To pay his staff better than the civil service seemed to many of the business minds that dominated the BTS Board as a form of arrogant profligacy, of common schoolmasters getting above their station. Woodward, however, assumed altogether different values. “For myself,” he wrote, “I am indifferent. I mean that I do not work myself for a salary, but that my staff may be

¹²⁴Pearce, F “Si Monumentum” p7.

¹²⁵Pearce, F “Si Monumentum.....” p7.

better paid",¹²⁶ for he believed teaching to be a profession of utmost importance that needed no defence.

The foundations for potential discord were readily apparent and came to a head late in 1910 in an incident which would only have assumed currency in a critical and unsympathetic atmosphere. A person associated with the school (and probably the Board) had been responsible for spreading rumours about Woodward which eventually compelled his intervention.

This person had long been under my eyes. He began well when I came and I thought him really interested in the school. He was very useful in many ways and I never dreamed of corruption till I was forced to focus my attention on the developments of late months. Things reached such a pitch that I had to take a certain step. The cloud burst last Saturday and, on Monday, I addressed the whole upper school and masters and told them everything, and I was so crushed that I myself have actually asked my superiors to give up the work which I undertook nearly eight years ago. The bitter part of all this is...that I am the one accused as the cause of it all, and that I am openly pointed as a monster of corruption...I have known this for years but I have never said a word and have borne it patiently. You could not believe the things I have had to undergo for long, long years...All this suffering is a great probation for me and a necessary step on the path. Marcus [Aurelius], whose work I send you, says 'It is a royal thing to do good and be abused for it'. It is a common insensitive person who does not suffer.¹²⁷

Woodward's letter is laden with genuine anguish and humiliation, though couched in 'suffering borne patiently', a very Victorian and Calvinist Stoicism. More than anything, however, it reveals Woodward's immense vulnerability and sensitivity, despite his brash and determined exterior, or

¹²⁶ Letter of FL Woodward, 8 June 1909. Cited in Gunewardene p20.

¹²⁷ Letter of FL Woodward, date unknown, but probably late 1910. Cited in Gunewardene p20. By 'superiors' Woodward did not mean the BTS Board, but those in Adyar like Besant, or even the 'unseen Masters', whose 'messages' were relayed through Besant and Leadbeater.

more likely, because of it. Unfortunately, the substance of the allegation and the nature of his 'certain step' is unclear; neither Gunewardene nor any other commentator seeks to illuminate the incident, and oral tradition is silent except to suggest accusations of financial impropriety.

The fact that Woodward states that he had been 'openly pointed as a monster of corruption', (which was often code in those times for sexual impropriety), suggests a possible explanation, which would also explain the failure to give any detail. Conversely, given Victorian hyperbole, 'corruption' may have just as easily implied financial impropriety.

The nature of Woodward's belief in a 'karmic' connection with some students suggests a highly erotised affinity, but there is no reason why this may not have manifested in an intensely sublimated commitment to teaching and his students. Woodward was raised in an English public school milieu, which not only gained notoriety for sodomy and flagellation, but also nurtured intense and innocent friendships. These same-sex, "romantic friendships" were a normal and natural part of maturation, in those pre-Wildean days, and in no way necessitated sexual enactment. In a late twentieth century western culture inordinately sexually self conscious, such 'friendship' would immediately be seized on as evidence of sexual proclivity - just one more way our 'knowledge' has deprived us of the innocence of human interaction.

Woodward would have found such intensity of connection and interest a natural inclination devoid of ulterior motive, though it would undoubtedly have given rise to accusations of favouritism. Such sublimated behaviour may be the source of profound creativity and sensitivity, and not the foil for some 'latency' that threatens intrusion, a view given currency by

blurring the distinction between 'sublimation' and 'repression'. 'Sublimation' and its negative psychological equivalence with 'repression', implying a wholly unhealthy mode of living, denies 'sublimation' a perfectly respectable origin from the word 'sublime', which suggests, in fact, a remarkably creative and inspirational channelling of energies.

The intense concentration on the construction of the new school and fostering the future direction of favoured pupils, certainly suggests such a direction of interest, rather than some kind of paedophilic prurience. The Theosophical Society, like many other 'occult' sects, seemed, for some reason, to attract an unusual number of homosexual men and women, and people fascinated with androgyny. The activities of some like Wedgewood and Leadbeater (who founded the BTS Ananda College in Colombo) were notorious.¹²⁸ However there is no evidence to associate Woodward with these interests.

Woodward never married, may have tended to be misogynistic, and may have preferred the company of other men, but he was also a product of a time (c.1870-1900) when, demographically and historically, a greater number of men never married or married very late, and when men accepted the notion of 'romantic friendship' in youth and close relationships with other men in adulthood, unselfconsciously. Even Woodward's friends, reminiscing about their mutual past, seemed to assume his heterosexual inclination. "Think of confessing to A.B. [Annie

¹²⁸ See Tillet, G. *The Elder Brother*. Leadbeater was dismissed from the TS in 1906 for sexual impropriety with young boys, but later reinstated by Besant. 'Bishop' Wedgewood was homosexual, notoriously promiscuous and died insane from tertiary syphilis.

Besant],” one friend wrote, “that one had a *petite-affaire* with one of C.W.L.’s *houris*. That could have happened!”¹²⁹

Woodward’s mainly male world was not particularly unusual at the time. He even may well have been a ‘*Brahmachariya*’ or natural celibate, a respected mode of life in India and Sri Lanka, which certainly does not earn the suspicion it does in the West. Moreover, Woodward lived for some 33 years in Rowella, Tasmania, a very small community, and there was never any suggestion of homosexual behaviour, though others in the district were certainly subject to rumours of that kind. Though he certainly focused attention on students whose worth inspired his interest, Woodward seems very unlikely to have ever allowed such attention to spill into a sexual sphere.

One plausible explanation for the attacks on Woodward would have been financial.¹³⁰ Woodward was consumed by construction of the school and, in pursuit of his vision, was not a person who gave much importance to accurate bookkeeping, a ‘sin’ unlikely to endear him to the business people who commanded the BTS Board. He never prepared statements of accounts and simply spent what was required. He was so naturally honest that any misappropriation would have been unthinkable. However, his inclination to apply whatever funding, whether his own or from trust funds, to the school, without thought of accountability, left him open to

¹²⁹ FW Robinson to FL Woodward 8 March 1952. Shield Heritage File. Obviously, not all TS activity was spiritual. Robinson was writing about leaving the Esoteric Section of the TS, in 1931, after it banned smoking and required confession of extra marital affairs to the Outer Head, at the time, Annie Besant. CWL (Leadbeater), not only had a coterie of young boys, but also had, particularly about Krishnamurti, a collection of young women, the *gopis* or *houris* [the beautiful virgins provided in Paradise for all good Muslims]. These innocents obviously provided temptation for many of the Adyar circle.

¹³⁰ Personal conversation with Dr Vitharana, who has the impression from old boys of the Woodward era that the matter was based on suggestions of careless accounting.

innuendo and rumour. The atmosphere of scepticism, envy and resentment of his single-minded confidence and success would have been sufficient to give the matter credence, something that would have hurt Woodward deeply, because any impropriety was utterly alien to him. The importance of support from friends and staunch allies, like Henry Amarasuriya and ER Gunaratna on the BTS Board, would have been of crucial importance to Woodward and their demise (Gunaratna in 1914 & Amarasuriya in 1916) may have hastened his departure from Ceylon.

To understand the ferocity of the atmosphere one has only to compare the difficulties faced by Woodward's successor but one, FG Pearce, again a man of charm and dedication, albeit with a hint of naïveté. Pearce assumed the Principalship in 1921, two years after Woodward had left Ceylon, but departed the school after much emotion and acrimony for reasons spelled out in correspondence with the Ven. Seelakkandha,¹³¹ one of the leaders of the *Sangha* with whom Woodward also corresponded. Woodward's correspondence with Ven. Seelakkandha was relatively constrained, but Pearce opened his heart and divulged much about attitudes. He wrote on 7 August 1923, after he had left Ceylon, advising of his resignation and stating that,

I know many evil things are now being said about me, and that I am accused not only of teaching 'heresies', but also of having favourites, of wasting College funds, and all sorts of bad things.¹³²

¹³¹ Sri Lankan National Archives. All Seelakkandha's correspondence (much of it in Pali), and that of other prominent Buddhist *Theras* [Elders] is held within an extensive collection of the SLNA.

¹³² Gurugé, A.W.P. *From the Living Fountains of Buddhism: Sri Lankan support to pioneering Western Orientalists* (Colombo: Ministry of Cultural Affairs, 1984) p451. Letter of FG Pearce to Ven. Seelakkandha. SLNA.

All these accusations have a familiar ring and undoubtedly were similar to those aimed at Woodward. Rather than a single or main accusation, Woodward was probably subjected to a constellation of complaints covering issues like teaching unorthodox beliefs, having favourites, and 'wasting' funds.

Many of the problems Pearce had seem to stem from a clear lack of understanding of the crucial differences between Theosophy and Buddhism, a distinction Woodward also seems to have failed to make (or rather, assumed his own syncretic version was more authentic). Pearce had originally left Mahinda in 1918¹³³ to take up work with the Theosophical Society organising the scouting movement in India but, after Woodward left, the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society "repeatedly begged and besought"¹³⁴ the TS President, Annie Besant to allow Pearce to return as Principal.

When he returned to Galle, he formed a TS Lodge and a branch of the Order of the Star in the East (OSE), that met within the school¹³⁵ and which was perceived by many in the Galle BTS, "who are very orthodox", as teaching 'heresy'. Pearce protested: "I did not teach anything except the purely orthodox doctrines of Buddhism, any more than Mr Woodward did",¹³⁶ and could not understand the perceived threat. After all "It was Theosophy which helped me to understand the greatness of Buddhism.....and I try to help others in the same way if they desire such help". There was no conflict in his mind, as he had no "wish

¹³³ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. III, No. 4 February 1918, p36.

¹³⁴ Gurugé p449. Letter of FG Pearce to Ven. Seelakkandha. SLNA

¹³⁵ No student was ever obliged to attend, and meetings were held after hours.

to convert anyone”,¹³⁷ a very strongly held view of the TS, which could never understand why their idea that all faiths were facets of the ‘Truth’ was not appreciated by those who saw theirs as exclusive repositories of the ‘Way’.¹³⁸

Part of the problem lay in the fact that, though Theosophical in name, Buddhist Theosophical Societies were orthodox Buddhist organisations that had attached themselves to the organisational capacities of the TS and its reformist, perceived anti-Christian agenda. Like the Buddhist nationalist leader, Anagarika Dharmapala, they tended to view the doctrines of Theosophy with suspicion, and not without justification. The Galle BTS ordered Pearce to discontinue meetings of the TS and OSE and added further provocation by reappointing a teacher that Pearce had dismissed. His position was clearly untenable and Pearce felt compelled to resign, events that were eerily repeated for Pearce in later life.¹³⁹ Woodward had never been as naïve as to form TS structures in the school, though there can be little doubt that Woodward experienced the same doctrinal clash with orthodoxy as Pearce.

¹³⁶ Gurugé p450. Letter from FG Pearce to Ven. Seelakkandha. SLNA. And that was probably exactly the problem.

¹³⁷ Gurugé p453. Letter from FG Pearce to Ven. Seelakkandha. SLNA

¹³⁸In fact, early Christian/Buddhist encounters were received amicably by Buddhists, who generally accepted other ‘ways’. It was the strident insistence by Christians of being ‘right’ which soured the relationship and nurtured an understandably resentful Buddhist reaction, which was enunciated in equally uncompromising terms during the Buddhist Revival.

¹³⁹ When Pearce optimistically resigned his senior position in the Ceylon educational bureaucracy, he took up the role of Principal at the Krishnamurti run Rishi Valley School in India, only to be continually undermined by Krishnamurti, who appointed people of his own choice over Pearce’s head. Pearce again had no choice but to resign which caused “a lot of misery and upset in the school”. Pearce then started the Blue Mountain School in Ootacamund (where Olcott was inclined to retreat for the summer). His wife though suggested that Krishnamurti had “broken her husband’s heart by manoeuvring [Pearce] out of the Rishi Valley School and he had not lived long afterwards”. Pearce, who lost his job at Mahinda, in part, for activities regarding Krishnamurti, was ironically, to fall foul of the man himself years later. Pearce, the kind and gentle idealist, was outdone by the charismatic and manipulative Krishnamurti. See:-

Sloss, *RR Lives in the Shadow of J Krishnamurti* (London: Bloomington, 1991) p265-266.

The inclination of the Galle BTS School Board to impose its opinion and dictate school policy can also be observed in the fate of another Principal, Mr PR Gunasekera (Principal 1926-1932). Gunasekera was dismissed by the BTS Board, accused of incompetence and dereliction of duty, though the matter seemed to have more to do with his differences with the Board¹⁴⁰ and the fact that he had, somewhat unwisely, stood against a member of the Board in a local municipal election. He also, again somewhat unwisely (and, frankly, improperly), used the school magazine¹⁴¹ to defend his action. Gunasekera sued the Board for wrongful dismissal by way of breach of contract and eventually won his action. Because he considered the matter one of principle, however, he donated his win to charity, a noble gesture but one also intended to really rub the nose of his opponents in his success.¹⁴² He later became High Commissioner to Australia, so his career did not suffer, but the incident demonstrates the ferocity with which the Board ‘punished’ those with whom they felt a difference. An interesting aspect of Gunasekera’s dismissal was a frantic request, once more, for Woodward to return to Mahinda as Principal, a request he rejected without hesitation; “Of course, I have no intention of living in the tropics again.”¹⁴³

In the light of these incidents, it should not come as any surprise that Woodward encountered opposition and difficulty in his plans to construct

¹⁴⁰It would seem these differences were primarily with Henry Woodward Amarasuriya, though the issue tends to be avoided in conversation, probably because HWA was a significant national figure and benefactor of the school, as was his father and his father before him.

¹⁴¹ *Mahinda College Magazine* December 1929, p62. The article is signed *Civis Ceylonicus* but it is no doubt the work of Gunasekera. It is a very vigorous and provocative defence of teachers to (rightly) participate in politics. The accusation was that his political participation brought the name of the school into the political arena. In using the school magazine for his defence, he did exactly that of which he was accused.

¹⁴² *Ceylon Daily News* Friday 10 May 1935. And also from the grand-daughter of Gunasekera.

¹⁴³ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 15 June 1932 (FOSL)

a new school, nor that the level of vehemence should have been so substantial. Despite his charm and engaging manner, he had undoubted self-confidence and determination. He regarded his efforts as directed towards a 'noble cause' and he accepted no contradiction. This confident determination could appear as 'autocratic', as Pearce suggests¹⁴⁴ and, no doubt, arrogant to some, particularly when he would not bow to the demands of 'lesser' minds in such matters as remaining orthodox and keeping adequate accounting records.

The School Moves to New Premises.

By 1912, sufficient of the school was completed to allow it to move from the Fort to Mahinda Hill, though there was still a need for more classrooms to house the 300 students then on the roll. On 1 August 1912,¹⁴⁵ nine years from the day Woodward had begun at the school, and twenty-one years from the day the school commenced, the Director of Public Instruction, John Harwood, opened the new buildings and presided over the school prize-giving.

Harwood, who was appointed in the same year Woodward arrived¹⁴⁶, had observed the growing quality of education at Mahinda, and had even gone out of his way to point out and praise Woodward's efforts in the Legislative Council educational committee, noting the high standard, particularly of English, in the school.¹⁴⁷ While the occasion of an opening invariably lends itself to hyperbole, there is obvious sincerity in the

¹⁴⁴ Pearce "Si Monumentum....." p7.

¹⁴⁵ Vitharana Ms 23.

¹⁴⁶ *Ceylon Administrative Reports* 1903.

¹⁴⁷ *Ceylon Sessional Papers XX 1911-1912*, p226. In a public review of education, wherein Woodward gave evidence, Harwood made the comment, "I think I ought to say that Mr Strickland [School Inspector] did show me the English composition in your standards as being the best specimens of English that he had come across in that year's work."

oblique references to Woodward in Harwood's speech, which recognise Woodward's intentions and commitment:

During the last nine years ... it dawned on me [Mahinda] was in [the] charge of one who carried on the work with a view to educate. ... Some work for honour and glory, or for the furtherance of some special cause or possibly for private profit, but here the guiding principle was to regulate things with a view to educational effect on the minds of those spending their time within its walls.¹⁴⁸

During the following twelve months, further buildings were erected on the site, mainly with the generosity of Henry Amarasuriya and Gate Mudaliyar ER Gunaratna, and the school was strengthened by the appointment of Frank Gordon Pearce, a young energetic Theosophist, as Deputy Principal, on 25 October 1913.¹⁴⁹ Small details were not overlooked in the building program and, significant for its simple charm, was a water-fountain surmounted by a miniature *dagaba* (pagoda) erected in memory of Olcott, near the Olcott Hall.¹⁵⁰

While the Olcott Hall remained the centre piece of the school, Woodward constructed his two-storey quarters, library and room for senior classes on an imposing pinnacle that allowed him to observe both the entire campus in a sweep of his eye and, in the distance, the sacred peak of Sri Pada (Adams Peak). Far from creating for himself an escape from the rigours of school, he placed himself at the apex where he could continue to observe his pupils at work or play from his second-storey balcony. One student, writing years later, remembered "how thrilled he was by that

¹⁴⁸ Cited in Gunewardene p23. Vitharana Ms p23.

¹⁴⁹ Vitharana Ms p25.

¹⁵⁰ Vitharana Ms 23. Gunewardene p24. The *dagaba* was built with a legacy from a member of staff who had died, DC Ponnampereuma.

wonderful vista from the upper storey” when he came to enrol and first met “that genial Englishman.....- tall, ascetic looking, yet kindly, and with a humorous twinkle in his eye”.¹⁵¹

Woodward could view from the balcony, between corridors of classrooms, the Olcott Hall where the students gathered each morning with their teachers to await his arrival in absolute, pin-drop silence. Then, with considerable deference to good timing, he would descend, cloaked in academic robes, the rhythmic sound of his footfall gathering volume as he made his way along the cobbled corridor between the classrooms, from the Principal’s quarters to the Hall.¹⁵² The effect was solemn, austere and monumental, with more than a touch of Victorian theatricality, and undoubtedly intended by Woodward to be that way. On his arrival the students would recite the *tisarana* (Three Refuges) and observe *pāncasila* (The Five Precepts). The day concluded with another formal assembly and recitation of stanzas from the *Cattamanavakavimana*¹⁵³ as well as the (British) National Anthem.

Observing from the present, one might find humour in the Victorian grandiosity Woodward lent to aspects of school ritual, but he obviously recognised a fact, frequently overlooked in the present age of studied casualness, that a sense of occasion and ritual builds significance into human activity beyond the simple sum of individuals present. To a degree, that intention was an aspect of the English public school culture

¹⁵¹Leanage, SW “Woodward and Mahinda”, newspaper article 29/6/68, paper unknown, SLNA Times Biography PKT 4579.

¹⁵²Vitharana, V. *The Message of Woodward* p12. This ceremony, which Vitharana had observed as a student, was a practice continued by Woodward’s successors as Principal up to the 1940’s and 50’s as part of the “Woodwardian Tradition” of the school.

¹⁵³Vitharana Ms p24.

out of which Woodward had originated, but his was not a simple emulation. He obviously had insight into the process and recognised both its absurdities and utility. If that were not the case, his manner would have remained locked within a pompous persona of unutterable dullness, or that of a charming Mr Chips. Instead, Woodward maintained an ability to shift appropriately and naturally between personae, a Buddhistic understanding of the impermanence of functional ‘selves’.

As indicated earlier, Woodward had a facility for inviting children into a relationship of equality while remaining respectful of the boundaries between adult and child. He maintained an immense sense of fun and mischief, a grasp of the absurd that dispelled for the moment the aristocratic dignity he exuded on formal occasions. A student of the period recalled sitting in class one day when the principal’s face appeared smiling over the classroom half wall.¹⁵⁴ “Where’s RABADAA!!” (the toddy-bellied boy), he asked, loudly exaggerating the rolled tones of the syllables. The students all joined in the laughter at such an unexpected intrusion and “I observed that a ...stockily built boy with a big round bellywas blushing like a nervous bride!”¹⁵⁵ And each day thereafter, when Woodward passed the class he would peep over the wall like some mischievous gnome and make the same joke about “Where’s RABADAA!!”

The humour is childish, relying on repetition of an essentially nonsense phrase, and tinged with a little Victorian and youthful cruelty, yet the

¹⁵⁴Classrooms were built with a half wall, with the remaining area open to the roof, allowing air to circulate. Eaves were wide so as to afford protection from monsoonal downpours.

¹⁵⁵Leanage, SW “Woodward and Mahinda”. The protruding belly may well have been a result of malarial infection of the spleen.

person remembers the incident as “kindly humour”. As with other incidents involving Woodward, the potential for hurt or humiliation is avoided by the overwhelming kindness he exuded, though the risk remained and, in the hands of another, could have resulted in considerable anguish. Leanage, who relates the incident, thought he discerned the reason for the particular attention the pupil received from Woodward.

The boy was reserved, enigmatic and socially awkward, but had an unusual mathematical mind, with an ability to glance at a problem on the blackboard and “write the answer straight away at the bottom, then proceed to work it out”, with never an error. Woodward’s humour and attention was a way of acknowledging the boy’s difference and unusual qualities, while inviting his inclusion in the group.¹⁵⁶ It was an odd means, which today would be frowned on, yet it showed a wise understanding of children, recognising that a simple request to include the boy would have been futile. Making him an object of the Principal’s interest, while dismissing the child’s difference in humour, made him an object of interest to others, facilitating his inclusion.

In one way, this particular boy was favoured no more than other students, for Woodward had nicknames for most of his students, usually characters from Shakespeare, or puns, in Sinhala or English, on attributions and personal features, and like all nicknames there is just a touch of cruelty mixed with the fun, such as one untidy, scruffy student known as ‘Caliban’¹⁵⁷ and another, for reasons that perplexed the recipient, known

¹⁵⁶The future of the boy was sadly restricted by the opportunities of colonial society and he ended working for the railways, despite obvious academic potential.

¹⁵⁷ Weerasigne, GD “Woodward of Mahinda: great educationalist & Pali scholar” newspaper article, paper unknown, 23/5/68 PKT4579 SLNA.

as 'Opium'.¹⁵⁸ The element of cruelty in Woodward seemed always to have been well hidden or overshadowed by his warmth, since the use of nicknames can also be a form of affection, familial interest and care, and his students certainly loved and revered him. It may also be true that the ubiquity of English schoolyard nicknames tended to make both recipient and those who initiated such appellations insensitive to the underlying cruelty. There is after all, a long history of their use - even Elizabeth I was renowned for the none too subtle nicknames she imposed on her courtiers.

There is something of the schoolyard rowdy that continues to come out in Woodward's behaviour, which no doubt facilitated his regard among students. One student, who later became a teacher at the school, recalled his student admission, a scene illustrating Woodward's whimsical oddity. He was taken with his brother to Woodward's office and upstairs quarters. "He received us very nicely, made us stand before him and placed two pieces of pomegranate on our heads", no doubt to confine any movement and fidgeting. After their interview, they descended the stairs from his quarters, where upon Woodward "threw the pieces of pomegranate at us"¹⁵⁹ which they caught and enjoyed. It was a disarming gesture intended to deflect the children's nervousness, while focusing their attention on his presence, and rewarding them with a kindness at its conclusion. Nevertheless, there is an aspect of Woodward that intended

¹⁵⁸ *Century of Memories* Witanachchi p63ff. Despite protestations that Woodward was never unkind, this nickname troubles me because the explanation I recall from school days was that someone called 'Opium' was known as that because they were 'a slow acting dope', which is hardly kind.

¹⁵⁹ Extract from the Diary of Mr B Amendra admitted to Mahinda College 13 October 1913. Extract courtesy of Deshabandu Albert Edirisinghe, Colombo, who was taught by Mr Amendra in 1926.

to shock or confuse the normal responses of others and which enjoyed 'tom-foolery'.¹⁶⁰

Woodward's ability to invite children into a relationship of equality was matched by a similar ability with adults. While appropriately respectful of others, whether children or adults, he never resorted to the usual human defences of social discomfort, awe, deference, or patronising behaviour. Unlike most natural solitaires, he had a social ease and,

adapted himself to whatever society he was in. There was not an atom of pride, nor of mock modesty, in him: he would neither patronise the humble [n]or make much of the great.¹⁶¹

Pearce recounts an occasion one Saturday, when Woodward was sitting on his balcony, reading and smoking a cigar, and relaxing in more or less native dress - "rather less usually" - consisting of a "white sarong, a shirt, and a white cloth tied over his head like a bandage"¹⁶², not unlike the casual attire that caused such comment when he moved to Tasmania. However casual though, so "much depended on what one could wear, on what one did wear, and what one defiantly presumed to wear,"¹⁶³ and wearing native dress was a statement in itself, self-consciously adopted by Sinhala nationalists as a way of admonishing the abandonment of national culture and the adoption of western attire, an aspiration with which Woodward agreed. There was a knock at the downstairs door and a servant tip-toed up to the balcony, apologised for the disturbing him and

¹⁶⁰ Personal interview: Nigel Heyward [25 April 1995] Heyward grew up with Woodward as a close neighbour and friend and his view is that Woodward enjoyed 'wrong footing' people by unexpected and exaggerated behaviour.

¹⁶¹ Pearce "Si Monumentum....." p6.

¹⁶² Pearce "Si Monumentum....." p6.

¹⁶³ Ludowyk *Those Long Afternoons* p16.

informed Woodward that there were ‘policemen’ down stairs, but that he had told them ‘the master’ was resting.

Woodward made no attempt to hurry, but got up slowly and, dressed as he was, wandered downstairs to find out what the ‘policemen’ wanted. When he opened the door, there, at the foot of the stairs, was the Rt. Hon. Brigadier-General of Ceylon in uniform and braid, along with the Assistant Director of Education, though he showed no obvious surprise and “was soon chatting easily and affably, showing them around the college”.¹⁶⁴

What the visitors thought of Woodward’s nonchalance and dress statement (or lack of it) is unknown, but, as Pearce points out, there was probably nothing adverse or uncomplimentary, “for his very manner and presence disarmed adverse criticism” and his “natural dignity.....stopped the mouths of those who might be inclined to laugh at him as a crank”.¹⁶⁵ Pearce’s judgment is, I believe, accurate, for even in Tasmania, years later, no one amongst the many I have spoken to, ever regarded him with anything but respect though his odd eccentricity was readily acknowledged. In the light of this tale, it becomes possible to understand the ease with which Woodward would have invited the Australian Prime

¹⁶⁴ Pearce “Si Monumentum.....” p6. Since Pearce arrived in the school after 1913, it is possible that the unusual combination of the Brig-Gen and the Ass.Dir. of Education may have had something to do with the 1915 Riots and Woodward’s correspondence with the Governor, Lord Chalmers, a fellow Pali scholar, regarding Henry Amarasuriya. Woodward had written 26 May 1915 and November [date indecipherable] 1915 defending Amarasuriya, and recommending his consideration for Gate Mudaliyarship, the highest of the native titles.
See RG/257 SLNA.

¹⁶⁵ Pearce “Si Monumentum.....” p7.

Minister, Robert Menzies¹⁶⁶ to his home for tea and discussion on a number of occasions in Tasmania.

Making of a Myth.

With his characteristic avoidance of publicity, Woodward tended to remain in the background of events. Even within the Theosophical Society, Woodward did not seek the limelight. His annual report to the TS was brief and understated, while those of Mrs Musaeus Higgins of Musaeus College, were expansive and somewhat self-congratulatory.¹⁶⁷

Despite his avoidance of attention, he nevertheless attracted interest, though he was often misunderstood. A student, who had permission to enter the library early, would observe Woodward every morning from the window of the library, pacing a stretch of about 120 feet [30m] behind the Olcott Hall, to the west of the Principal's quarters, with his favoured piece of cloth tied around his head for protection from the elements. Woodward would immerse himself in concentrated 'walking meditation' on a *sakman* [walking] *maluwa* [path],¹⁶⁸ for a full hour, rain or shine, a practice he continued when he lived in Tasmania, carefully pacing the long verandah at the front of his house.¹⁶⁹ This obviously impressed students brought up in a culture that respected spiritual practice, and they would speculate on what he meditated, which obviously had to be profound. They had "heard the story that he had practised for a long time

¹⁶⁶ Heyward, N Transcript of radio broadcast 7NT Tasmania 1952.

¹⁶⁷ Theosophical Society Annual Reports 1903-1919 Adyar: Theosophical Publishing. Anyone who would accept an eponymously named school has some difficulty with grandiosity.

¹⁶⁸ I am grateful to Dr Vitharana for an explanation of *sakman maluwa*.

¹⁶⁹ Heyward, personal conversation.

the meditation known as ‘remembering the past’ and had succeeded in awakening memories of past lives”¹⁷⁰

This particular meditation is described by the student as involving concentrated recollection back, day by day, week by week, to childhood, and to the moment of birth, whereupon memory enters the silence of the “before becoming consciousness”, leading one day to the revelation of past lives, which “Mr Woodward is said to have followed.... with success.” He then goes on to suggest that a “coconut property in the interior belonging to the College¹⁷¹ had been named by Mr Woodward ‘Lignus Estate’”, after a “Greek Senator of old in whose person Mr Woodward had spent one of his previous lives”.¹⁷²

The story is remarkable indeed, but the explanation is far more prosaic. ‘Lignus’, far from being Greek, is, of course, Latin for ‘wood’ and was Woodward’s ‘code’ name¹⁷³ in the *Lives of Alcyone*, the chronicle compiled by CW Leadbeater from his ‘astral’ studies of the past lives of Krishnamurti and other TS insiders. The *Lives* was an important talking-point during this period¹⁷⁴ among TS acolytes, particularly those close to the Adyar inner circle who provided the *dramatis personæ* of these

¹⁷⁰ Leanage, SW “Woodward and Mahinda”.

¹⁷¹ A coconut property was donated to the school in the latter part of Woodward’s principalship, the income of which was intended for the Principal’s use. It was to become a matter of great dispute when the government nationalised schools in the 1960s. Woodward also had a tea estate, which he owned in his own right, and which he named “Lignus”, which the writer obviously confuses with the former property.

¹⁷² Leanage, SW “Woodward and Mahinda”. Ordinary ‘walking meditation’ is, contrary to this description, remarkably simple in content, if difficult in practice. Most Theravadin meditation techniques, like the Buddha’s claim to an ‘open palm’ teaching (ie no ‘hidden’ teachings), are readily accessible. Mahayana techniques, on the other hand, tend to be more esoteric and emphasise visualisation.

¹⁷³ I am grateful to John Cooper for this information.

¹⁷⁴ The TS at this time was entering a period of heightened public acceptance and membership. It was also the period of Krishnamurti and the Coming World Teacher, a millenarian movement in many respects with extremely heightened expectation.

extraordinary tales of Boy's Own derring-do. It was inevitable that a garbled version would make the rounds.

Thus the tales from the *Lives* blended wonderfully with the sight of Woodward engaged in meditative practice to produce the basis of myth, a prospect Woodward found both amusing and horrifying. Woodward was aware of the high regard he was accorded among his students, again not unexpected in a culture that revered great teachers or *gurus*, and was aware, too, of the potential to exaggerate his qualities - beyond his own cultivated exaggeration. He was genuinely modest, or rather, was sufficiently aware of his own foibles and failings to find what he regarded as 'oriental exaggeration' a considerable embarrassment, and he took pains to avoid such excesses. He expressed this point of view in a letter to the Ven. Seelakkandha¹⁷⁵ commenting on a eulogy written by the *Thera* on the death of Edward VII, where Woodward had corrected the English.

The work is characteristically oriental, as you say, notably in the wonderful comparisons between the royal person and the planets and gods, whom he is supposed to surpass. To us Western people, of course, such high praise is not usual- and knowing the human character of the late Duke, we do not accept it as truth but as 'oriental compliment'.¹⁷⁶

As is typical of Woodward, he couldn't avoid a wry, if oblique, reference to the obvious disparity between Seelakkandha's 'oriental' hyperbole and the baser rutting habits of the late King.

On Woodward's death, he required that his ashes be scattered, so that no portion was retained as a potential 'saintly' relic by his past students.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ FL Woodward to Ven. Seelakkandha 21 January 1911 SLNA.

¹⁷⁶ Gurugé *From the Living Fountains of Buddhism* quoted on p44.

¹⁷⁷ Buddha relics are a feature of religious practice and each *dagaba* or *stupa* is also a reliquiae with some portion of the Buddha's ashes or bone fragments eg the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy is the

He once wrote that there “were enough arahant [saints] relics in Ceylon alone to stock a Harrod’s store” though he conceded - as would most Buddhists - that “any object, if worshipped long with reverence will exude sacred effluvia”. And he added for self-effacing good measure, “One of my old sandals, lost in a boggy place on my old tea-estate in Ceylon, is so worshipped!!”¹⁷⁸ The irony is that, even in Tasmania, where reverence for relics is unknown, nearly every person who knew Woodward retained some remembrance of him, however trivial. In effect these were ‘relics’ that unconsciously recognised the ‘special’ character of the man and sought continued contact with that source.¹⁷⁹

Woodward as Educational Administrator.

Successful ventures are rarely the product of simple accident, but rely on the fortuities of time and place, as well as more pragmatic forces like money and energy. Woodward’s success and importance rests substantially on time and circumstance: the emerging significance of education in Ceylon’s nation building and a parallel religious revival in need of effective attributes of renewal. His impact, however, would have been far less without his pragmatic qualities: his obvious energy, determination and preparedness to expend his own resources. He certainly saved the school from almost certain collapse and substantially advanced its size and influence, aspects of which are attributable to Woodward’s often unusual administrative style.

repository of one of the Buddha’s eye teeth which, according to those who have seen it, is unusually large. Like portions of the ‘True Cross’, relics have multiplied, this being seen as testimony to their sacred origin.

¹⁷⁸FL Woodward to IB Horner 7 September 1949. (FOSL)

¹⁷⁹Even the people who currently own “Bhatkawa”, though neither are Buddhists, reserve a niche in the hallway for a Buddhist shrine in acknowledgment of Woodward’s previous occupancy.

Woodward was no simple idealist, but a person who wisely refused to expend energy on tedious and vexatious aspects of education, of which there are legion. He would not accept undesirable students turned out of other schools, those students simply interested in sport, those who had more money than character, or those who simply wished to cram for exams or government appointments.¹⁸⁰ If a student presented a difficulty in the school, he had no hesitation in getting rid of him - "and there was no relenting afterwards."¹⁸¹ This obvious selectivity, which Woodward would not alter, whatever the financial inducement, guaranteed the success and cohesion of the school community, ensuring all "would suitably fit into the school".¹⁸² Some today may question the 'easy' solution of simply ridding oneself of the problems, but Woodward had little time for such sentiment. He focused on a coherent school culture and spirit of commitment; the rest - scholastic achievement - would follow naturally.

Woodward reinforced this coherence by generally recruiting teachers from past pupils of the school¹⁸³ which, of course, tended to heavily emphasise the values and outlook of the school and locked in place what became known as the "Woodwardian Tradition", a kind of school *mantra*, a formula of values and approach that provided the school with a blueprint that would secure it through future adversity. One significant example of Woodward's policy was the appointment, in 1932, of Mr Edgar Wijesooriya as Principal. He was an ex-student of Woodward

¹⁸⁰Pearce "Si Monumentum ..." p 5.

¹⁸¹Pearce "Si Monumentum..." p8

¹⁸²de Silva, AB Dionysius "Woodward- great Buddhist educationalist" 1969 SLNA Pkt. 14148.

¹⁸³Anon. [probably Gordon Pearce] "A Story of Determination. Mahinda College, Galle. 1892-1921" *The Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* Vol 1, No.2 Colombo: WE Bastian & Co. 1921, p31.

(1915-18) and remained Principal until April 1962 when schools were nationalised.¹⁸⁴ Wijesooriya was a consolidator, rather than innovator, a product of a deliberately conservative policy that secured self-replication and Woodward's stamp on the school long after his departure. The policy, though, was not Woodward's own innovation, having been borrowed from the practice of his old school, Christ's Hospital, which similarly recruited from among old boys.¹⁸⁵ The result, however, reinforced the uniformity of Mahinda's product: similar values, ideas and beliefs with the stamp of a Buddhist nationalist outlook.

Part of that spirit Woodward engendered in his pupils emanated from his attitude towards scholarship and examinations, where the influence of Barnard and Stamford can be seen. His ideas on learning were a mix of opinionated passion and rigid convention, though obviously never boring. He believed a broad classical education gave a flexible cultured mind and training that enabled one to overcome difficulties in later life, and more than anything, "Love learning for its own sake was his motto".¹⁸⁶ He believed, too, that 'great' literature "cannot be judged for a century yet." and that Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, a poem he had learned by heart, was the "chief literary work of the century and the deepest philosophy" and a poem that contained "almost everything". He loved Keats, "the most luscious of poets", particularly his *St Agnes Eve*, a poem that "depends much in the gorgeous words, the quaint ideas, the use of colouring and the 'ages-long-ago' sort of feeling." He loved Coleridge, Wordsworth, and

¹⁸⁴Wijeratne, Dantamarayana, Samara-Wickrama [ed] *Centuries of Memories*, p55ff.

¹⁸⁵I am indebted to the archivist of Christ's Hospital for this information. I have also no doubt it was the policy of great many other Public Schools in Britain and probably Sri Lanka.

¹⁸⁶Anon. "My last Year at Mahinda College" *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. IV No. 4 July 1922, p5.

Shelley, but, a Stoic to the last, he disdainfully dismissed Gray's *Elegy*.... as indicating, "Gray was suffering from ennui",¹⁸⁷ an obviously inexcusable indulgence.¹⁸⁸

This passion for learning exceeded any interest in honours though honours and scholarship success were and remain the private elite schools' hallmark of reputation. Woodward loathed the nineteenth century regard for exam results and the resultant 'cramming', which many schools in England excelled in providing and he made it clear to students and parents alike that

If you want your boy educated not crammed - you can send him here. If he passes the examinations, well and good but he will not be crammed for them. If you don't like that then don't come here.¹⁸⁹

Nothing could have been more clear or more blunt, and as a result, as Pearce points out, the school moved without the feverish pace that schools often exhibit before exams. Instead there was always an orderly steady pace of work and atmosphere of congenial learning.

The effect of this approach was a flexible mind capable of breadth and reflection. Paradoxically, while producing a pupil of uniformity within the "Woodwardian Tradition", the school also emphasised the kind of mind required for considered thinking, much like the odd paradoxical product of the English Public School system. Rather than English clones and little

¹⁸⁷ Gunewardene *FL Woodward*...p78.

¹⁸⁸Dahanayake, W. "Woodward of Mahinda" (a review of Gunewardene's book on Woodward) newspaper unknown 11/2/73. SLNA Pkt LB/4579. Dahanayaka, a somewhat irascible and unpredictable personality, was one time prime-minister.

¹⁸⁹Pearce "Si Monumentum..."p5.

‘brown sahibs’, the school created an apt product for nation-building; independent minds with strong cultural, religious and national goals. And while the school rarely headed the honour lists for examinations, the achievements of ex-students were impressive. In 1904 Mahinda College only advanced 3 candidates for the Cambridge Local Examination, compared with its rival, Richmond College, in Galle with 13, and the prestigious Royal College, Colombo, with 20. By 1910, however, Mahinda had 14 candidates, Richmond 15 and Royal 19, a considerable advance on previous efforts, and an indication that, while ‘cramming’ was *outré*, scholarship nevertheless prevailed.¹⁹⁰

Whatever the merits of Woodward’s methodology, he attracted the interest and regard of educational administrators, like Harwood, who respected his efforts, if not his philosophy. That regard was sufficient to see him appointed to the powerful and prestigious Board of Education in 1917,¹⁹¹ by the Governor, a crowning social and political recognition of himself, the College and, more particularly, the cause of Buddhist education.

Progress and Karma.

There is, from a present perspective, a naïveté in Woodward’s underlying belief in Progress, an unconscious nineteenth century social assumption that only began to be doubted, and ultimately supplanted by disillusion and cynicism, in the late 20th century. The roots of nineteenth century faith in Progress reach back to the Greeks and their belief in recurring cycles like the Eastern concept of *kalpas*. Woodward’s mix of

¹⁹⁰ *Ceylon Administrative Reports* 1904 & 1910.

¹⁹¹ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. III, No. 4 February 1918, p17.

theosophical, Greek and oriental belief, poses, the not unfamiliar view, that such cycles are not “squirrel’s-cage-ic”,¹⁹² but more akin to a spiral.

Thus his view does not mandate constant ‘improvement’ but envisions a *Kali Yuga*, or Dark cycle, and periods “when no Buddha is on earth”. Throughout such cycles, however, the force that moves human lives and rebirth is the karma which “is his own and no other’s”,¹⁹³ and with which one alone must struggle. Despite such fluctuations, Woodward assumed progression towards fulfilment of some ultimate ‘scheme’ for humanity, a belief echoing Christian concepts of God’s ‘plan’ and purpose. Assured by such beliefs, he assumed a phlegmatic, philosophic view of his own and others’ efforts, while never letting go his belief in the ultimate maturing of all endeavour.

Pearce, Woodward’s loyal deputy, would spend many an evening after dinner, or on Sunday, on the high verandah of the Principal’s residence, overlooking the school, the tree tops and the distant verdant hills, discussing with Woodward the earnest intention of their efforts. Like teachers from time immemorial, Pearce questioned the value of his efforts and confessed his doubts. Woodward, however, placed great emphasis on readiness, on the appropriate receptivity of people, in much the same way Buddhism makes a distinction between the *savaka* (literally, ‘one who has heard’) and the ordinary, unreceptive *puthujjana*. As Woodward expressed it to Pearce, “If the Lord Buddha Himself told them, it would

¹⁹² Vanapala [FL Woodward] “There is Nothing New Under the Sun” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. IV No.6 April 1924, p8.

¹⁹³ Vanapala “There is Nothing New Under the Sun” p8.

not convince them until they are ready for it.”¹⁹⁴ And he would pour his lofty, theatrical scorn on the younger man’s doubts in feigned indignation,

What a ridiculous ass you are!Colonel [Olcott] asked me to do this job and so of course I do it. Besides the results will appear some day, they are bound to. It doesn’t matter whether we see them or not.¹⁹⁵

Far from a glib dismissal or naive act of faith, Woodward’s attitude was a firmly felt Buddhist view, an intensity of conviction that manifested as a simple, somewhat paradoxical equanimity and calm. It was the conviction of a *savaka*, a man who had absorbed his faith and belief beyond the need to convince others and lived it with a balanced humour. His attitude to outcomes, given his acceptance of karma, presented as an “indifference as to results, once he had done his best.” In accord with the essential tenets of Buddhism, he displayed an indifference to desire, eschewed ambition and recognition, and craved nothing for himself beyond the space and opportunity to exercise his interests and skills. And if unwanted, he would simply go elsewhere. He was, as Pearce concluded, “balanced in both joy and sorrow, full of devotion and a keen sense of duty, yet never carried to excess in either feeling or action.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Pearce “Si Monumentum....” p10. A distinction is made in Buddhism between the one ready to receive insight, the *savaka*, and the *puthujjana*, the ordinary, ignorant person. Woodward frequently makes this distinction in describing others, though the person of the *puthujjana* may not necessarily be unintelligent, simply unable to receive the necessary insight. Even the Buddha, in many of the stories, would intuitively sense someone in the audience ready to hear, and would address them almost to the exclusion of others. eg The story of Suppabuddha, the leper, an interesting and important story, because leprosy excluded people from membership of the *sangha*, thus implying that receptivity did not require one be a monk.

¹⁹⁵ Pearce “Si Monumentum.....” p10.

¹⁹⁶ Pearce “Si Monumentum.....” p9.

While Pearce can hardly be described as unbiased, he was a man of some ability and judgement (as his later success in colonial administration demonstrated), and his views of Woodward are not without grounding in experience and observation. For him to describe Woodward as “one of the greatest educationalists, and certainly the greatest Buddhist educationalists of modern Ceylon”,¹⁹⁷ deserves some attention, mainly because he made his comments, recognising that Woodward sought no recognition and had achieved this aim of obscurity admirably. Pearce was anxious to elevate recognition of Woodward’s efforts, which in his mind were considerably underrated and unrecognised because of the way Woodward usually exercised his influence, quietly and unassumingly behind the scenes, unfazed if others claimed recognition for his efforts.

¹⁹⁷Pearce “Si Monumnetum....” p3.

National Significance.

The Creation of a University.

Woodward's commitment to scholarship led him naturally into involvement with the establishment of a university for Ceylon which he saw as essential for national advancement. The Ceylon University Association was formed to advocate the establishment of a university and by 1903 the 'university question' began to appear as an issue in the *Ceylon Administrative Reports*, with a proposal to establish a relationship with London University, a course eventually realised in 1921 with the creation of a university college.

The establishment of a university was very much an aspect of the early nationalist agenda and involved local identities, men of nationalist moderation like Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam MLC (President of the Ceylon University Association), Sir James Pieris MLC, (Vice President CUA) - both later founders of the Ceylon National Congress - Dr Marcus Fernando, Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy, and other prominent Tamil, Burgher and Buddhist identities, Woodward among them. "Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam and I started the idea,"¹ Woodward declared but, as was his nature, he tended to work behind the scenes, letting others assume public prominence, though his efforts did not go entirely unnoticed. Sir Ivor Jennings, the respected former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, "once paid a well deserving [sic] compliment to

¹ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 3 November 1945. (FOSL)

Woodward, placing him foremost in the struggle for the establishment of a University.”²

For Woodward, a university was a vision and ideal, “to combine the best of East and West, of ancient and modern” based on a foundation of Sanskrit, Arabic and Pali, mixed with a “proportion of Greek and Latin” overlayed with Sinhala and Tamil, and “using as a binding mortar, the almost universal English tongue”.³ He envisaged a broad education and decried narrow specialisation and accumulation of facts.

Our ideal University product must be...a man of culture, he will not be the product of a “mere group of departmental schools or of a polytechnic institute”. It is a dreadful thing to have to study in order to score marks and please examiners....⁴

In keeping with his age, Woodward saw the product of his idealised university as principally men, though as his keen observation of the progress of women in Cambridge attests,⁵ he was sympathetic in that bemused kind of way men present when wrestling with their misogyny. While it goes without saying Mahinda College was intended as a boys school, (though girls were later admitted after Woodward’s time), the education of girls was certainly part of the Theosophical Society agenda. The Society had always been a site of forceful female personalities like Blavatsky and Besant, and of women drawn to the Society’s emancipist inclinations, women like Marie Byles. Even one of the Theosophical Society’s many arcane subsidiary organisations, Co-Masonry, was open

²de Silva AB Dionysius “Woodward- great Buddhist educationalist” 1969 newspaper unknown, SLNA Pkt.14148.

³ Woodward, FL. “Some University Ideals” *Journal of the Ceylon University Association* Vol.2 No.7 November, 1909, p155.

⁴ Woodward, FL. “Some University Ideals”, p156.

⁵ Correspondence with IB Horner, (FOSL) *passim*.

to female membership, which its secular Masonic equivalent never managed.

TS Schools for girls were opened, like Musaeus College in Colombo under the formidable Mrs Marie Musaeus Higgins, with whom Woodward had a close friendship. Nevertheless, while the TS advocated education for women, it retained, to our sensibilities, oddly conventional views about the place of women. Woodward, who in many respects was a closet misogynist - and what confirmed bachelor isn't? - trod a wary path through the thicket of feminism. He attempted to steer a course,

between the two extreme views, of those who would have women the toy, plaything and meek slave of man; and those who see in the emancipated, sometimes be-trousered, harsh-voiced imitation the outward sign and token of a new freedom.⁶

No sensitive New Age male, Woodward nevertheless struggled with his patriarchal inclinations to affirm the need and right of women to equality of opportunity in education, and objected strongly to any diluted, dumbed-down, alternative to the rigours demanded of male education. Despite a valiant attempt at 'progressive' views, Woodward remained trapped by traditional stereotypes: "Woman has wit, man humour; man is mental and progressive, woman intuitive, orthodox and conservative".⁷ In the final analysis Woodward believed,

we shall all agree that in training up our girls to become noble wives and mothers, we are in very truth making the bodies which are, in turn, to give us birth in future ages, mothers of men indeed.⁸

⁶Woodward, FL. "Girls, Wives and Mothers" *Ceylon National Review* January 1906, p16.

⁷Woodward "Girls, Wives and Mothers" p15

⁸Woodward "Girls, Wives and Mothers" p19

While the sentimentality of this view may have little appeal in the present, except among the incorrigibly unrepentant, Woodward was expressing a view in the 1906 *Ceylon National Review*, the journal of the liberal Ceylon Social Reform Society, that probably appeared progressive. Progressive or not, Woodward's vision of a university was principally as a male domain, with women relegated to the vital role of incubator.

And while Woodward was continually absorbed by idealised visions of possibility for his university, there was always a practical aspect to Woodward's interest. He railed against "*the smallness and meanness of the salary or reward*",⁹ which discouraged quality educators, and he advocated adequate tenure and proper pension provisions for teachers and lecturers: "*we want the profession of the teacher acknowledged as responsible, worthily paid, thought worthy of a competence [pension] in declining years, no less than that of public pensioned servants.*"¹⁰ His views were 'radical' for the time (and would be in the present) and generated considerable controversy, though the negative responses sound familiar to modern ears:

We are....more and more taxing the nation for the purpose of supporting part of it. No one should make poverty a crime; but there is no reason why we should make it a merit.....We should always be on our guard against a scheme which tends to lessen our responsibility as citizens.¹¹

However idealistic and occasionally quaint Woodward's vision of a university was, it was a cause close to his heart. A university was a sign

⁹ Woodward, FL. "Some University Ideals", p154. Woodward's emphasis.

¹⁰ Woodward, FL "Pensions for Teachers" *Journal of the Ceylon University Association* Vol.1 No.3 April 1907, p225. Woodward's emphasis.

¹¹ Letter from HG Rawlinson, *Royal College Journal of the Ceylon University Association* Oct 1907, p348.

of sober maturity and national competence. It was a sign of national arrival. What disturbed Woodward were the impediments to such symbols of national progress, principally, caste and inter-communal rivalry. They were a constant and disturbing feature of College politics, and were likely to be even more of a hindrance to the establishment of a university. Woodward continually emphasised the issue of tolerance, cooperation, and communal cohesion as a precondition for national advancement, and drew one of his cartoons on one side of his blackboard to reinforce his message [see Illustrations]. The cartoon shows two characters - one, a 'tiller of the soil' (*Goyigama*), the other, a 'toiler of the deep' (*Karava*) - facing one another in conversation, with the question underneath, "Are we fit for a University".

What is extraordinary is that the blackboard cartoon is preserved, under perspex, to this day. What is even more extraordinary is the continued failure to apprehend the message: in Sinhala culture, preserving the 'relic' tends to be more important than preserving the message. The cartoon was originally drawn in 1916 which means Woodward himself initially preserved the drawing in an attempt to stress the senseless damage of continued inter-communal rivalry. "Are we fit?" remains a pertinent message today in Sri Lanka, for it implores a social and attitudinal alteration, a social maturity few societies have attained or sustained. Few listened then, and few do today. Unfortunately the drawing was preserved because Woodward preserved it, not because of the relevance of the message, but the message nonetheless remains.

The Elevation of Sinhala.

Pearce astutely perceived a national significance in Woodward's endeavours, beyond simply his regional effort to build Mahinda College

to prominence in the South of Ceylon, and this was observable in his contribution to national identity and to the promotion of Buddhism. Woodward's efforts to elevate the importance of Sinhala, Pali, and the teaching of Ceylon history and culture, were also innovatory, and Mahinda College was probably the first to introduce Sinhala in an English medium school¹² and in this was "one of the pioneers, if not the pioneer, in teaching Sinhalese...".¹³ It was also one of the first English-medium schools to introduce Pali, so that students could "verify the teachings at first hand for themselves".¹⁴

The eventual acceptance of Sinhala and Pali on the Cambridge Local exams - the 'O' and 'A' level equivalent of the day - was largely due to Woodward's effort and influence. The significance can only be appreciated when it is recognised that for many of the Sinhala elite (and certainly among the Burgher or mixed race group), English was the first language of the home, and Sinhala was regarded as an inferior 'street' language.¹⁵ Woodward's advocacy of Sinhala, "at a time when a fight had to be put up"¹⁶, and his strong preference for the use of Sinhala names¹⁷ (instead of anglicised names) for children was, for the times, radical indeed and within a general reformist agenda.

¹²Roberts, N. *Galle: As Quiet as Asleep* p153.

¹³ Pearce, FG, "Hopes and Achievements. The present and future of a Buddhist school." *The Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* Vol II, No 1, 1923, p33.

¹⁴ Pearce, FG, "Hopes and Achievements....." p34.

¹⁵ Sinhala, like modern Greek, has a demotic and literary version, which have taken time to reconcile. Woodward himself recognised that the everyday Sinhala of the time was limited in application but capable of evolving into an effective means of communication at all levels, which it has over time.

¹⁶(Anon.) "Woodward of Mahinda" *Mahinda College Magazine* 1953 pii.

¹⁷ This was a sore point among reformists, particularly in the maritime Low Country where the practice was common. See Wickremeratne *Religion, Nationalism and Social Change* p19.

Religio-linguistic nationalism was central to Woodward's thinking, though it was always contained within an overall spirit of tolerance and inclusion. Later manifestations, like the radical *Bhasa Peramuna* (Language Front) that forced the 1956 Bandaranaike government to implement Sinhala as the sole official language of Sri Lanka, would have saddened him. He would have been even further disappointed to see his beloved concept of a national university torn apart and devalued by politics and the language issue, more particularly because the attempt to erode the privilege of English-speaking Sri Lankans only led to an exodus of Tamil and Burgher talent sorely needed by the nation.¹⁸

Woodward perceived clearly the link between the decline of national language and the devaluation of national culture, and more importantly, of Buddhism, since so much of Sinhala is steeped in Buddhist thought and analogy, much as English is redolent with biblical phrases and metaphors. He found children without knowledge of the vernacular "wanting in something" and despising "everything connected with their people",¹⁹ as he told the Legislative Council investigating committee into education. While there were some on the committee who obviously saw grave nationalistic dangers, Woodward stood his ground and saw only positives in the national and cultural affirmation of teaching Sinhala. For Woodward, a Sinhala student "who did not know his mother tongue was a disgrace to his nation"²⁰

¹⁸See, Tilakasiri, J *Religion, Language and Politics in the Development of Higher Education in Sri Lanka (1940-1990)* Inaugural OH Wijesekere Memorial Lecture, Colombo 21st September 1990.

¹⁹ *Ceylon Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council XX 1911- 1912* Volume 1, p227.

²⁰Jayawickrama, MS "Remembering a great teacher" 28/5/69 ? paper unknown, SLNA Pkt. LB/4579.

His advocacy of Sinhala was principally aimed at the middle class who disparaged use of the vernacular and who studied English to the neglect of their own tongue.

The study of English has become a sort of fetish in Ceylon. English is no doubt necessary.....without English could we in Ceylon keep in touch with the great world currents...But is that any reason for boycotting the mother-tongue in schools and for allowing our youth to grow up so ignorant of it ...?²¹

These people he saw rightly as an influential elite whose neglect of the mother tongue endangered the nation by severing links with a “common religion and common culture”. Woodward emphasised, “*a people without a language of its own is only half a nation*” for, like Tacitus, he saw “the language of the conqueror in the mouth of the conquered is ever the language of the slave.”²² The school was seen as a centre for oriental culture and unashamedly wanted their “boys to be nationalists, patriots, who will be ready not only to talk but to *act* for their country’s welfare.”²³

Woodward’s nationalist inclinations were advanced in the face of a real and alarming decline in cultural consciousness under a subtle but constant colonial erosion. To him the elevation of the national language was pivotal to any reversal of fortune. However, far from simply an aspect of

²¹ Woodward, FL “The Advantages of a Knowledge of the Mother-Tongue” Address To Ceylon Social Reform Society, cited in Russell *Communal Politics*.....p272.

²² Woodward, FL. “The Nation and the Mother-Tongue” *Ceylon National Review*- the organ of the *Ceylon Social Reform Society* Vol. III No.8 February-June 1909, pp2 & 3. Woodward’s emphasis. Woodward wrote a similar article in the same journal in July 1906.

It is interesting to note that Dr CWW Kannangara, who became Minister for Education in 1931 and a significant educational pioneer, had obviously absorbed Woodward’s arguments sufficiently that later commentators attribute the aforementioned quotations to Kannangara, eg Weeraratne, WG, *Buddhist Re-awakening in the 19th & 20th Centuries- Some Prominent Personages*. (Colombo: Malalasekere Institute of Buddhist Education and Culture, 1992.) p12. Weeraratne does, however, acknowledge the importance and stature of Woodward (p8) and includes him among his ‘prominent personages’. As with many such examples, Weeraratne was, of course, an Old Boy of Mahinda College.

nationalism, Woodward saw language as part of the global need for infinite variety rather than homogeneity, a rather prescient and contemporary view.

We are often told that the day of small nations is over, and that they must merge in the great peoples.....; that the time has long gone by when a people....can preserve its individuality in the grinding mill of the great world-process; that there is no need for such to last any longer. I regard this belief as a great mistake.²⁴

Woodward was not caught in some chauvinistic rejection of English, which he saw as an international *lingua franca*. He had a clear understanding of the links between language, culture, and religion, and the affirmation of self, community and nation.

He brought this *national* perception and outlook into his educational approach in Mahinda College, insisting on the learning of Sinhala and certainly not prohibiting its use in the school grounds, as many schools mandated and punished. He built Mahinda, “in spite of every obstacle, opposition and discouragement, [into] *the* pillar of Buddhist education and hence Buddhism itself - in the South”.²⁵ This comment of Pearce’s is not simple hyperbole. The southern part of Sri Lanka is culturally distinct²⁶ (even the curry is hotter) and made a disproportionately greater contribution to the nationalist movement and Buddhist Revival. The influence of Mahinda College in that formation cannot be underestimated since, as Pearce rightly suggests, it was the pillar of Buddhist education in the South, which considerably exaggerated its influence on the Buddhist

²³ Pearce, FG, “Hopes and Achievements.....” p34.

²⁴ Woodward, FL. “The Nation and the Mother-Tongue” p1.

²⁵ Pearce “Si Monumentum..” p3.

Revival and on the nationalist movement to which it was inextricably connected. The teaching of Sinhala (and Pali) were integral aspects of this engendered national outlook.

The Elevation of Buddhism.

As has been suggested, Woodward's significant contribution to the Buddhist Revival was principally through the College and its impact on national elite formation with a substantial Buddhist inflection. The College was a significant vehicle, the sole Buddhist instrument in the South, for diffusion of the particularly laicised Buddhism which, as Obeyesekere has suggested, became the pronounced ideology of the educated Buddhist bourgeoisie. This influence makes Woodward's contribution to national formation extraordinarily important, and while he was one of many contributors, he provided, through the College, a continuing foundation for dissemination of the new Buddhist ideology.

Woodward's influence, though, was oblique, rather than directed at the barricades, for he was anything but a fervent religious proselytiser. He avoided moralising and preaching and "... was never one to push his views down other people's throats [though if] asked.....he expressed himself... uncompromisingly."²⁷ There was no doubt his assumption of responsibility for Buddhist education in the senior classes was very deliberate, which is why it probably unnerved the BTS Board. He set his undeniable stamp upon the views and understanding of Buddhism by his pupils, promoting his highly laicised view of Buddhism, distinct from its

²⁶This distinction has most recently manifested in the rise of the Marxist JVP, which generated a bloody uprising in the South in the 1980s leading to economic and social decline in the south in addition to horror stories of extra-judicial killings and disappearances.

²⁷Pearce "Si Monumentum..." p9.

origins, and emphasising personal access to the scriptures though the English translations he principally provided for his pupils.

Many of these translated stories were later printed in the *Mahinda College Magazine* which Woodward founded, and which was later printed in purple ink because Woodward himself always wrote in purple ink.²⁸ Woodward, like many at that time with a 'message', was inclined to seek multiple re-publication in different journals and then to collect them into 'tracts' for additional distribution, even collecting and consolidating them still further into book form, thus ensuring a surprising level of public penetration.

His translations were frequently published in the *Ceylon Daily News* Vesak editions, the Colombo based TS journal, the *Buddhist*, the British *Buddhist Review*, the *Buddhist Annual of Ceylon*, the *Young Citizen* and the *Adyar Bulletin*, (the latter being TS journals) and probably elsewhere in journals that have long since ceased. I have come across Woodward's translations, as far as I can ascertain, in every Buddhist publication in English then available in Ceylon, so the dissemination of his work was widespread, well known, respected and obviously much sought after among the educated elite which, as has been suggested elsewhere, disproportionately controlled the nationalist agenda.

Some of these translations were later collected by Woodward and published, in 1925, when Woodward was Librarian at the Adyar Oriental

²⁸ This is a link to Woodward's Theosophic roots where purple was regarded with spiritual significance. It also demonstrates the almost slavish regard often granted to Woodward's views and habits.

Library,²⁹ as a single edition, simply called *Buddhist Stories*. In the preface, Woodward gives some indication of his intentions. Firstly, these are stories, not simply scriptural translations, like his *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, published in the same year. They were taken mainly from the *Commentary* on the *Dhammapada*, and used to illustrate the moral verses of the *Dhammapada* itself (which Woodward also translated³⁰ and used in his teaching). He also took tales from other canonical books of the *Tipitaka*, and from the rich store of the *Jataka* or Birth Stories. Secondly, as Woodward himself emphasises, “I have made a choice of the best *short* stories in Buddhist literature”,³¹ since many Buddhist stories and parables tend to be long, digressive and involved. This is clearly the educator at work, providing accessible, moral tales that will not tax the interest of a pupil, but which disseminate the Buddhist message in clear unequivocal story-form with missionary intent.

The sheer volume of Buddhist scripture, parables and commentaries, necessitated selection, and while constraints like length were obvious, there were nonetheless highly personal aspects of selection that inevitably intruded and which were in a sense, biographical. It seems, on reflection, ironic indeed that he titled the first story of his collection “Solitude and Service”, a parable personal in its evocation. And there is something of Victorian morality that pervades titles such as “Honour Old Age”, “Inattention”, “Haste to do Good”, “The Weapon of Goodwill”, “Guard your Thoughts”, “Excess of Zeal”, and so on. It is true also that the

²⁹ The Library, located within the Theosophical Society Headquarters at Adyar, Madras, is a respected institution with a fine oriental manuscript collection begun by Olcott.

³⁰ Woodward, FL *The Buddha's Path of Virtue- a translation of the Dhammapada* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1921.)

³¹ Woodward FL *Buddhist Stories -translated from the Pali* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1925), pv. Woodward's emphasis.

selection of stories emphasised those stories which were culturally familiar, like “The Hare in the Moon” (a motif observable in nearly every Sri Lankan temple), “Kisa Gotami and the Mustard Seed”, or the “Blind Men and the Elephant”, a story equally familiar to those in the West.

Whatever use there was of culturally familiar tales, however, there was nonetheless an emphasis on stories that illustrated firmly held views about duty, service towards others, moderation, modesty and moral rectitude - all emphasised nineteenth century Protestant values, observable in their influence on the Buddhism of the Buddhist Revival. It was a Buddhism tied profoundly to individual duty and moral enactment, couched in recognisable and valorised indigenous cultural, linguistic and religious terminology.

Woodward’s influence extended beyond his translations and Buddhist teaching into areas of concrete enactment, where his example provided pupils with a positive model of behaviour. He would attend the Buddhist temple with his pupils³² on religious occasions, like *Vesak* and *poya* days, and take *Attha-Sil*³³. Here was individual lay participation and commitment encouraged in a way that lowered the barriers between lay and priestly domains. It was also stunning affirmation of indigenous religious observance having an Englishman follow Buddhist rituals

³²de Silva, AB Dionysius “Woodward- great Buddhist educationalist” 27/5/69 paper unknown, SLNA Pkt. 14148.

³³*Vesak* or *Wesak*: is the full moon day in May which marks the day of the Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and death. *Vesak* was not a holiday until Olcott influenced British authorities to proclaim it.

Poya: are days linked to phases of the moon (new, quarter and full). Likewise these were not holidays at the time.

Attha-Sil: is taking eight of the 10 priestly vows - to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual conduct, lying, drugs and liquor, food after mid-day, entertainment, bodily adornment and high beds ie sleep on the floor. Though this makes nine, the last two are usually combined.

generally regarded by British expatriates as incomprehensible, primitive and pagan practice, a point not lost on his pupils and the surrounding local community at the time.

In his *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon and Other Papers*,³⁴ Woodward gives a graphic picture of a “Buddhist Sabbath in Ceylon”, rising at dawn to don the simple garb - a vest and two white clothes, upper and lower - of an *Upasaka*, or lay devotee, and walking bare-foot in procession with others in the chill morning air to the temple. He describes the women also dressed in white, bearing flat baskets of flowers, fragrant *namal*, *aralia* (frangipanni), white jasmine and blood red hibiscus, to place in the temple standing within its sandy courtyard, its *dagaba* (pagoda) tapering skyward and the sprawling, sacred bo-tree sheltering the “subdued yet joyous crowd”. While his description is a detailed depiction of a Buddhist ritual event, his commentary occasionally intrudes to correct the impressions of English readers and critics of Buddhism.

Glancing over the faces, one finds no trace of that pessimistic resignation which the ignorant attribute to the followers of the Buddha.³⁵

Woodward describes the rituals of taking Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha (The Triple Gem- *triratna*) under the guidance of the *Thera* (Elder) of the monastery and the commitment to *Attha-Sil*. What follows, at nightfall, is a sermon on the merit to be acquired from the day’s devotions. Occasionally a layman “puts a question on some knotty point”

³⁴Woodward, FL. *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon and Other Papers* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1914). Woodward dedicated the book “To Sirius A Lover of Ceylon”. Sirius was the code name of CW Leadbeater in the *Lives of Alcyone*..... I am grateful to the Manor in Sydney for a copy of this rare book.

³⁵Woodward *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon* p4. Woodward’s comment is a pointed riposte to the generally held colonial view of Buddhism as nihilistic and depressingly fatalistic.

and the monk replies by quoting the Buddha's words. "There is no speculation. The canon is final. It is enough. You must not venture to add your *ditthi* (view)...."

While, as Woodward points out, this intense conservatism has preserved the Pali texts, he again ventures his own opinion regarding the need for re-evaluation, using the words of his friend Caroline Rhys Davids, then president of the Pali Text Society, to suggest that if the *Metteyya Buddha* [the Buddha to Come] was to arrive, doubtless he would "recast" the Dharma as a "gospel and a philosophy built out of the knowledge and the needs of today."³⁶ This, again, advances views he emphasised to his pupils - the need for a fresh examination of the *Dharma*, as well as allusion to his firm belief in a *Metteyya Buddha* who would re-invigorate the Dharma.

The evening sermon presents a scene of tranquil beauty,

The ancient trees, hung with coloured lamps, the soft outline of the dome thrown against the velvet blackness of the star-spangled sky, the wreathing incense-smoke, the flickering candles, the hushed silence of the pauses in the monk's address, and, now and again, a quick patter of bo-leaves overhead as the breeze arises and dies away again, the white-robed crowd covering the sandy court; while on the ear falls the ceaseless trill of crickets from all sides - all makes for an impression of peace and beauty that will never fade from memory.³⁷

But it was merely a prelude to the evening *bana*, or preaching of the Dharma, an all-night recitation of the *suttas* in a number of shifts, till morning, a ritual of considerable endurance.

³⁶Woodward FL *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon* p8, quoting C. Rhys Davids *Buddhism* (London: Home University Library), p247.

³⁷Woodward *Pictures*..... p10&11.

While Woodward restricts his description to the ceremony at hand, there was more significance to these events than Woodward reveals. The gap between lay and priestly domains was distinct at the time and it was unusual for the Sinhala, English-educated classes, let alone an Englishmen, to observe *Attha-Sil*. At *Vesak*, in 1909, however, a number of prominent Buddhist professional men and government officials in Galle, 24 in all, including Woodward, set the example of lay involvement to others by observing *Attha-Sil*. This was an important statement to the community, reviving practices that had long fallen into disuse, an action in keeping with the aims of the Buddhist Revival, and an encouragement still evident in the activities of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (ACBC) to this day.³⁸

It seems Woodward conducted himself with “an enthusiasm rare even in a born Buddhist”³⁹ (the unfortunate sign of a convert) and after the midday repast Woodward gave a long sermon on the nature of *dana* and the merit acquired by Mr and Mrs Jayasundere who had made all the arrangements and provided the meals. As was his inclination, he could not resist some fun and observed he was the same age as a 93 year old member of the party, only reversed!

The observance of *Attha-Sil* was repeated in most years thereafter and Woodward was always a participant,⁴⁰ contributing significantly to the revival of lay participation. Woodward also brought the temple to the school and initiated ceremonies where pupils would offer *dana* or alms to

³⁸See Bond *The Buddhist Revival*

³⁹Ratnatunga, PD. “Frank Lee Woodward” *The Buddhist* Vol. XXIII No.3 July 1952, Colombo: YMBA, p50.

⁴⁰ Ratnatunga, PD. “Frank Lee Woodward” p50.

the monks in the Olcott Hall. He, too, would participate, washing and wiping “the monks’ feet as they came into the hall single-file for the almsgiving” and later helping serve the meal to the monks “with great humility”.⁴¹

Beyond this ritualistic participation, Woodward made little outward show of his religious adherence. His was an emphasis on inward dwelling of faith manifested in action and treatment of others - an austere Victorian and Puritan approach to faith. It was similar to the kind of manifest faith of Victorian figures like Woodward’s acquaintance and Governor of Ceylon (1913-1916), Lord Chalmers. Chalmers was a fellow Pali translator for the PTS, though Woodward was sometimes critical of his work - “I find many textual errors in Chalmers’ [translation].His work is superficial as a translation - and he omits a good deal.”⁴² Nevertheless, he respected Chalmers and they met again when Woodward visited England in 1925. He described “old Chalmers” as “Certainly an old Roman in his last birth. In many ways resembling old Fitzgerald [author of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*] whom I remember as a boy when I lived on the east coast among the fishermen”.⁴³ He was disappointed later, though, when Chalmers, after his remarriage in 1933, ceased to be

⁴¹Peiris, W “Architect of Mahinda” *Radio Times*- Weekly magazine of the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation Vol. 23 No. 12, 26 March-2 April 1971, p2. Buddhist practice in Sri Lanka differs from that of Thailand where the traditional early morning line of monks go to the households for *dana*. In Sri Lanka, this is not the practice generally, and householders usually supply the monks at the temple.

⁴² Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 16 December 16 1946. (FOSL).

⁴³ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner, 12 March 1945. (FOSL). Fitzgerald spent much of his latter years in Kessingland on the bleak Norfolk coast where Woodward’s father had been parish priest. Woodward undoubtedly knew Fitzgerald, as the village then, and still, remains extremely small.

interested in Pali translation- “Well, this comes of marrying a widder at 80 years of age!!”⁴⁴

Chalmers’ austere ‘Roman’ demeanour and caustic manner, however, provided an exterior reserve that deflected attention from his extensive private charity. As a young man in Treasury, he worked quietly in his own time, unrecognised, among the missions in Whitechapel, much as later he acted as anonymous financial benefactor to the education of many young men at Cambridge when he was Master of Peterhouse.⁴⁵ This was an expression of *piety*, a much maligned manifestation of faith which, with the nineteenth century growth of individualism, often assumed the shape of pompous, obsequious self-advertisement. Nevertheless, in its authentic form, piety sought simply to serve, and valued anonymity.

It was this characteristic Protestant piety and Puritan non-conformity (rather than conventional Anglicanism or Catholicism) that shaped the Buddhism of the Revival, which in turn influenced the nationalist movement. While not Woodward’s invented ‘tradition’, it was he who most advanced this shape of Buddhism in the South and influenced others more widely through his educational views, his English translation of scriptures, and the products of the school. Woodward was a key ‘toiler in the vineyard’ that provided a depth and penetration of these social and religious influences.

This shaping of traditions, values and beliefs is a subtle and controversial aspect of cultural formation, particularly in respect of Buddhism in Sri

⁴⁴ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 1 December 1948. (FOSL).

⁴⁵ Matherson, “Lord Chalmers (1858-1938)” *Proceedings of the British Academy* Vol.25 1939, p326.

Lanka, that holds firmly to the view of itself as ‘original’, authentic and resistant to innovation and accretion. However, as Hobsbawm and others have demonstrated, shaping and re-inventing ‘traditions’ is a cultural dynamic intended to facilitate, or resist, change, or even both simultaneously. What such ‘inventions’ or modifications of ‘tradition’ provide is “the sanction of precedent, social continuity and natural law”,⁴⁶ the cloak and authority of enduring antiquity to what are, in fact, novel attributes or emphases. Like the duck, re-shaped or invented ‘tradition’ is serene unaltered calm on the surface, while, beneath, the feet paddle furiously to counter the current.

The use of the term ‘Buddhist Revival’ in colonial Ceylon is itself a clue: the text indicates resurrection of ancient but neglected practices or ideas; the sub-text points to a process of innovation and invention in order to address needs unknown in the past, neoteric construction requiring the security and sanction of antiquity. Certainly, in colonial Ceylon, Buddhist culture was subject to extraordinary erosion by Christianity and western culture generally. The tenacity with which Sinhala Buddhist culture resisted is tribute to its inherent creative ability to re-invent its traditions in the face of such assault. It was a religious and cultural challenge the Sinhala had endured historically before, through waves of Hindu influence and challenges by Mahayana doctrine to its Theravadin tradition.

As one would expect, the re-invention of Theravadin Buddhist ‘tradition’, its ‘Protestant-isation’, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, involved adoption of motifs, methods, ideas and emphases of the western culture and religion that posed the threat. Again, the absorption of Hindu

⁴⁶Hobsbawm, E “The Invention of Tradition” p2.

and Mahayana elements in Sinhala Buddhism, so complete they are not even remarkable,⁴⁷ are testimony to that fact historically, so it should not be surprising to see the absorption of 'Protestant' elements in the Buddhist Revival, amplified as they were by 'sympathetic' supporters like Olcott, Woodward and other Theosophical Society personages. In some senses these powerful personalities were the 'Trojan horse' that lead many of these influences into the midst of Sinhala Buddhism and facilitated their absorption.

The influence of the Theosophical Society and its advocates has been extremely pervasive and persistent, an example of which is the leading contemporary Buddhist figure of the 1970s and 80s, both in Sri Lanka and abroad, the Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya. He joined the *Sangha* in 1914 and became acquainted with the German monk Nyanatiloka, (also a friend of Woodward), who told him of the English monk Allan Bennett (Macgregor), better known as Ananda Metteyya, and adopted the Sanskrit form of the name. Bennett was an early English Buddhist monk and, like many, was influenced by the TS and remained close to Annie Besant, though he rejected TS theology.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ To western sensibilities, the inclusion of Hindu deities and Mahayana features in Theravadin Buddhist temples, comes as a shock. The absorption of these elements is so complete as to be unremarkable, though they represent to the western mind a significant modification of 'original' doctrine.

⁴⁸ There are many contemporary references to Bennett (as he was generally known) that offer a quaint English understanding of Buddhism at the time.

See *Morning Post*; *Leeds Mercury*, *Yorkshire Post* 24/4/1908 for accounts of his return to England as a monk.

As the mythology of Bennett magnified, Dr. Paul Brunton (who in fact never obtained a doctorate) wrote a hagiographic piece "Pioneer of Western Buddhism" in the *Ceylon Daily News Vesak Number* May 1941. Brunton, again a much TS influenced figure, was himself not shy of a little self mythology, and though well known for a number of popular books like *A Search in Secret India* and *The Secret Path* published in 1935, he was a somewhat sad figure of the western 'guru brigade'.

See Masson, JM *My Father's Guru- a journey through Spirituality and Disillusion* (Reading Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1993.)

The Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya taught Pali at the BTS Ananda College, Colombo, about 1924 and came under the influence of Dharmapala, then a vehement critic of the Theosophical Society, who urged him to write against the TS. Instead, Balangoda's delving into Theosophy seemed to have left lasting influences on his view of Buddhism, including mystical motifs, visions, and ideas of a particularly TS hue.⁴⁹ He became, in turn, an influential Buddhist teacher, becoming, in 1958, professor of Buddhism at Vidyodaya Pirivena, now a recognised university and centre for Buddhist studies.⁵⁰ So the TS influence continues, echoing through many sources and personalities into the present, till origins blur and recede from view. After all, the TS itself borrowed Hindu and Buddhist motifs, re-interpreted them and provided their own particular European and Protestant inflection before re-introducing them into the Eastern context; they were ideas and motifs well churned throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, down to the present.

The way in which these TS influences have persisted accentuates the importance of individuals like Woodward. His efforts promoting language, national culture and religion at Mahinda, though, cannot be appreciated without understanding of the decline of culture in the nineteenth century. Woodward's friend, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, himself a Hindu Tamil, (and nephew of Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy) described how, when he met Blavatsky and Olcott in 1880, he was a Police Magistrate in Kalutara and "Buddhism in Ceylon was...at a very

⁴⁹See Gombrich & Obeyesekere *Buddhism Transformed* p300 for an account of Balangoda's mystical visions and TS experiences.

⁵⁰ For a closer examination of the theology of Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya, See Gombrich & Obeyesekere *Buddhism Transformed* p299ff.

low ebb indeed.....abandoned.....especially among the English-educated classes.” More poignantly, he saw Buddhists ashamed to acknowledge their religion, and in “the Courts I was sometimes saddened to see in the witness-box Buddhists pretending to be Christians, and taking their oath on the Bible.”⁵¹

So pronounced was this decline in a Buddhist “voice” and advocacy that even in 1914 there was not a single Buddhist representative in the Legislative Council, despite the overwhelming Buddhist majority of the population. This decline of Buddhism under colonial domination, that Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam identified, was sufficient, in the 18th century, to see the institution of *Upasampada* (higher ordination) die out and have to be re-introduced from Thailand (Siam), a moment which marked the beginning of a Buddhist revival.⁵²

The remarks of Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam indicate the breadth of liberal ethnic tolerance he shared with Woodward. A man of immense sensitivity, he was a significant figure in the first wave of nationalist agitation for constitutional reform up to about 1922: “Indeed in the years between 1917 to 1921 the leadership in agitation for constitutional reform was in Arunachalam’s hands, as was the movement for the formation of the Ceylon National Congress,”⁵³ which was founded in 1919 and which met in Olcott Hall at Mahinda College in 1926. The legacy of this cautious constitutionalist, who died in 1922, became eroded by more political men who assumed the agenda of reform, assuming a militancy

⁵¹Arunachalam, Sir P. “Prize Day Speech, July 30 1914” *The Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. II, No.2, December 1914, p1. Reprinted from the *Ceylon Morning Leader*.

⁵²Weeraratne *Buddhist Re-awakening in the 19th & 20th Centuries* p4.

⁵³de Silva *A History of Sri Lanka*, p386.

that Woodward, with his odd elitism, would have probably found disquieting.

While he may have been a moderate nationalist, Arunachalam earned the resentment of the colonial establishment, which viewed even his moderation with suspicion. Ultimately he was to receive a knighthood but his career was dogged by rejection and racism. Governor Blake (1903-1907) rejected Arunachalam for the post of Auditor-General and for a position on the High Court, where a European, in his mind, would have more 'appropriate' legal experience.⁵⁴ He was rejected, too, by the resistant and conservative Governor McCallum (1907-1913) as "unfitted for a 'revenue appointment'".⁵⁵ Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam was not a unique case, merely an example of the continual racism that pervaded the civil service and the suspicion earned by those, like himself and Woodward, who advocated moderate nationalism in Ceylon. It took little to be viewed as 'undesirable' or 'radical', which adds considerable significance to the moderate nationalism advocated by Woodward.

Advocating nationalism.

The Theosophical Society was intimately involved in the establishment of the Indian Congress Party and Besant, in particular, was extremely active in the Indian nationalist movement. This nationalist tone of the Theosophical Society, however, would be considered cautious today, and was so regarded by nationalists at the time. Besant articulated a view of Ceylonese nationalism on her first visit to Ceylon, on her assumption of the Presidency of the Society, after the death of Olcott in 1907. In an address to the Ceylon Social Reform Society she identified the factors

⁵⁴CO337/21/11436.

inhibiting Ceylonese nationalism as residing in “a deep sense of inferiority, an exaggerated regard for the West and the absence of pride of country.”⁵⁶ She expressed a nascent internationalism when she suggested:

You should take what is valuable in English civilization....but remain Sinhalese through it all.....do not debase but only enrich, not nationalise but only increase the circle of your national thought.⁵⁷

Woodward too, adhered to this ‘nationalism with a high moral tone’, and was a foundation member of the Ceylon Social Reform Society which Besant addressed. While organisations like the Ceylon Social Reform Society were important agencies for the propagation of TS ideas, once again, Woodward’s principal instrument of influence on the formation of a national consciousness was Mahinda College. Nationalism was embedded in the school’s history and nurtured by Woodward. It was fostered by visits to the school by nationalist advocates like Anagarika Dharmapala, Mahatma Gandhi, Annie Besant, Col. Olcott, Rabindranath Tagore, and Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, and focused by events like conventions of the Ceylon National Congress held at the Olcott Hall in the school. It is not surprising, then, that Mahinda was also the place where the Sri Lankan National Anthem, *Namo Namo Matha*, was written

⁵⁵CO337/21/38053.

⁵⁶ Wickremeratne “Annie Besant, Theosophism and Buddhist Nationalism” p66. Wickremeratne suggests this address was the only time Besant spoke to a non-Buddhist or non-Theosophical organisation on her tour. This is strictly true but the Social Reform Society was obviously highly influenced by Theosophical Society personalities. Woodward was editor of their magazine *The Ceylon National Review* and Mrs Musaeus Higgins (of the TS run Musaeus College) and Mr Peter de Abrew, manager of Musaeus, were strongly featured in the group though it was presided over by the later influential and noted art historian Dr A.K Coomaraswamy. According to Woodward, though, he became a Theosophist in 1907. [Durai Raja Sinham (ed) *Homage to Ananda K Coomaraswamy A Garland of Tributes* (Buckinghamshire: University Microfilms, ND) p156]. See *Ceylon National Review* July 1906 p1.

⁵⁷ Besant, *A Buddhist Popular Lectures Delivered in Ceylon in 1907* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1908) p54. Cited in Wickremeratne, *Annie Besant* p66.

by its music teacher Ananda Samarakoon and first sung by students of the school in November, 1940.⁵⁸

The perceived nationalist influence of BTS schools can be judged by a secret report on the Buddhist schools commissioned at the time of the communal riots of 1915. The report by H.L Dowbiggin, the Inspector General of Police, written at a time of heightened anxiety and paranoia, presents a lurid picture of blame.

In the course of inquires into the cause of the recent disturbances one point is very clearly established, viz: that the whole responsibility for them rests with persons who have written and preached in such a manner as to foster contempt for authority and to stir up feelings of ill-will between classes. Prominent among them have been persons connected with Buddhist and Theosophical Societies.⁵⁹

Dowbiggin's singled out the BTS Buddhist schools for particular attention. He saw them as an "unwholesome influence" which did not "appear to encourage affection towards the British Empire". Further, he believed, "politics of a vicious type" was preached in BTS schools and even found its way into school magazines.

In fact, to our present sensibilities, a very mild form of nationalism was encouraged in the schools along with an odd regard for Empire - the Union Jack flew at each school and 'God Save the King' was sung each day. Woodward himself exhibited these contradictions for he never lost

⁵⁸Souvenir Programme- Musical Evening to commemorate the Memory of Ananda Samarakoon, 1998. Brief articles on the life and work of Samarakoon by Dr Vitharana & old student Kalyana de Silva.

⁵⁹ LT.Col. Stevenson Collection. Dowbiggin, HL. I.G.P "Report on Buddhist Schools", confidential report to the Governor, Lord Chalmers, sent in response to dispatch 520 of the CO Nov 1915. Stevenson's collection contains all of Chalmers' papers from his period as Governor. Stevenson is Chalmers' grandson.

pride in things English and was even reported to have been greatly downhearted when Kitchener was lost at sea during the First World War. The nationalism espoused, by Woodward and other Theosophists, was really a self-determination, or dominion status, under the wing of empire, an odd kind of early internationalism.

While Anagarika Dharmapala is given the honour of being regarded as Sri Lanka's proto-nationalist, his roots are firmly within the soil of Theosophical influence. Even his chosen name 'Anagarika' (homeless), while a classic epithet for a monk, was used by him to "denote an interstitial role.... to stand between layman and monk",⁶⁰ domains traditionally distinct, but which the TS-influenced Protestant Buddhism strove to break down with its laicised emphasis. Dharmapala's more strident, extreme nationalism severed the links with the Theosophical Society and, though Woodward approved Dharmapala's visits to Mahinda, he regarded him as a "whole-hogger",⁶¹ and inclined to "suffer from *Mana* (swelled head)"⁶² as a result of worship by "fanatics" in the West.

The local Government Agent, Lushington, kept an eye on Dharmapala's activities, though he distinguished him clearly from the actions of the local Theosophical Society in a manner Dowbiggin failed to do. He noted in his diary, in October 1906, the presence of Dharmapala in Galle, "stirring dissent among missionary converts",⁶³ particularly at the Catholic Mission, though he noted with relief, a year or so later, that the Buddhist

⁶⁰ Gombrich, R & Obeyesekere, G *Buddhism Transformed- religious change in Sri Lanka*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988) p205.

⁶¹ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 18 February 1946. (FOSL).

⁶² Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 30 April 1949. (FOSL).

⁶³ *Diary of the Government Agent Southern Province* 17 October 1906. RG 43/14. SLNA

resurgence had died down.⁶⁴ Another year later, however, Dharmapala was back again “stirring up trouble”, though Lushington, whose role involved the provision of basic government intelligence, was able to observe that,

The Buddhists here lean towards the Theosophical teaching and do not go with the Maha Bodhi Society [Dharmapala’s organisational base] which is much more inclined to be anti-English and anti-Christian.⁶⁵

This observation, however, did not mean the Theosophical Society was regarded as part of accepted European society. Despite the fact that the school, then within the Fort, was no more than a short block from the *Kachcheri*, Lushington obviously had little contact with Woodward, calling him ‘W Woodward’ when he wrote, 26 October 1907 that he had,

a queer request made to me by W. Woodward- Headmaster of Mahinda College- viz. that I preside at a meeting of welcome to Mrs Besant, who, though she succeeds to Col. Olcott, is not a Buddhist but a Hindu!

I declined as politely as I could [for] I have no sympathy with Mrs Besant or her works. ⁶⁶

Thus the Theosophical Society remained outside the *laager* of polite European society, yet not so distant that the distinction between it and Dharmapala’s Maha Bodhi Society was not appreciated.

While the TS, because of its perceived political moderation,⁶⁷ was seen as having lost a great deal of its influence by the beginning of the twentieth

⁶⁴*Diary GA-SP* 25 March 1908, SLNA RG 43/16.

⁶⁵*Diary GA-SP* 17 September 1909 SLNA RG 43/17. There is an odd error in Lushington’s *Diary* where he refers, obviously to Dharmapala, as the “Irish Priest”. Whether this is an unintended error or simply a part of the rumoured confusion of Dharmapala’s origins, I cannot comment. The Maha Bodhi Society continues to the present.

century, this does not accord sufficient weight to the manner in which it influenced individuals and permeated organisations. Despite the ‘crusades’ of Olcott and later, Besant, the Theosophical Society tended not to assume a central role. It chose, instead, to influence from the periphery, through its institutions and various ‘public interest’ and educational organisations. Like the Fabian Society’s relationship with British Labour, the TS discussed and promoted the ideas while others fired the shots.

The first truly grass-roots national action to emerge was the temperance movement of 1904 which, not surprisingly, given its activist tradition, arose in the South. This movement encapsulated the growing impact of the Buddhist Revival with its Protestant inflection; it was moralistic, puritanical, and labelled European Christianity as degenerate, an interesting retro-projection of exactly the characteristics assumed by the Christians towards indigenous culture and religion.

Most religions, except Christianity, had prohibitions on alcohol, a fact, along with the notorious overindulgence of some Europeans, which gave an anti-Christian bias to the campaign. Ironically, the methods and outlook of the Christian temperance movement were emulated in this movement, “prompted by a conscious reaction against cultural westernisation, which was identified with alcohol, meat-eating and Christianity”.⁶⁸

⁶⁶*Diary GA-SP* 26 October 1907 SLNA RG43/15. The TS, like cult groups today, use publicly recognised figures to add credibility to their public position, appropriating the recognition of others for their cause.

⁶⁷ de Silva *History of Sri Lanka*, p378.

⁶⁸ Rogers, JD *Cultural Nationalism and Social Reform: The 1904 Temperance Movement in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Studies in Society and Culture, 1994), p13.

The movement arose and dissipated fairly quickly. Temperance societies (*amadyapana samagam*) formed swiftly about April/May 1904 near Galle and spread rapidly. By August, their influence had spread from Colombo to Tangalla and even to Jaffna. By year's end most were moribund. Leadership was provided initially by local interests, but rapidly attracted prominent community leaders like DB Jayatilaka, Principal of the BTS Ananda College in Colombo, DSS Wickremeratne, secretary of the BTS and SNW Hulugalle MLC. Olcott came from India, in September 1904, to support the temperance movement and spoke, while in Galle, on the property of Muhandiram Thomas Amarasuriya, principal contributor to Mahinda College, who was also an arrack renter.

Rogers⁶⁹ feels that Amarasuriya manipulated Olcott (in order to undermine the temperance cause) into placing Woodward, as Principal of Mahinda College, in charge of temperance societies in the southern province. It is difficult to imagine Woodward allowing himself to be used in this way, though the obvious financial control Amarasuriya wielded over Mahinda lends some credibility to the assertion. More likely Amarasuriya simply saw an opportunity to maintain a weather eye on the movement. Woodward's views on alcohol were akin to his views on eating meat - it was best not to indulge for reasons of health and "psychic effects".⁷⁰ Like Olcott, his mentor, Woodward abhorred the social impact of alcohol and took the cause seriously - as he did most things - and was no pawn of Amarasuriya.

⁶⁹Rogers, *Cultural Nationalism and Social Reform* p16.

⁷⁰ Gunewardene *FL Woodward* p86.

Jayasekera⁷¹ claims the 1904 temperance movement was initiated and lead by the poor as a reaction to social decline under colonialism, but Rogers shows it was the rising middle class elite that moved quickly to assume control. What is most interesting, is the mimetic manner in which the temperance movement emulated its Christian counterpart and turned it to its own shape and use, much as the Buddhist Revival modelled itself. As a result, the temperance movement cannot be separated from other nationalist and religious movements of the time, a fact reinforced by frequent occurrence of the same names and the ubiquitous presence of the TS.

The 1904 temperance campaign was Woodward's first involvement in a national action and it undoubtedly appealed to him, as he was unable to perceive any national political action outside the context of its cultural and moral dimensions. By 1905, a further vehicle for the many broad national and cultural issues he advocated, arose in the form of the Ceylon Social Reform Society, one of the early 'nationalist' organisations, however moderate it may appear to modern sensibilities. The aim of the Society was, however, much broader than any political agenda and was founded to,

foster the growth of an enlightened public opinion among Ceylonese, re-awaken in them a sense of the value of their own traditions and national culture- language, literature, art, music and dress- and to promote amongst them that unity and mutual respect which alone can enable them to act together and exert influence of a political character, and assist each other in preserving these invaluable

⁷¹ Jayasekera, PVJ. "Temperance and Nationalism in Sri Lanka" *Kalyani*, Vols. 3-4, 1984-5, pp289-298.

elements of national individuality which are now neglected and in danger of final loss.⁷²

Woodward wrote extensively for the Society's influential journal, *The Ceylon National Review* and even edited it for a period. This was no revolutionary group, not even radically democratic, rather, it was dominated by 'constitutionalists' who viewed with caution political reform that moved beyond the capacity of the nation to absorb change.⁷³ It was a group, though, staunchly tolerant and communally aware, and elected an executive accordingly.

Vice-Presidents included Legislative Councillors SNW Hulugalle (who had previously been associated with the temperance movement), Sir James Pieris (later co-founder with Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam of the Ceylon National Congress), Abdul Rahiman, a leading Moor MLC, and Woodward's friend, Gate Mudaliyar ER Gunaratna, who was on the Board of Mahinda College and who collaborated with Woodward on translations for the Pali Text Society.

In keeping with its broader cultural agenda, it was presided over by the oriental art historian Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy,⁷⁴ son of the respected Tamil leader, Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy, who hailed from the same family clan as the Tamil nationalist figures Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam and his more conservative brother Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan.

⁷²*Ceylon National Review* July 1906, p1. Lead editorial.

⁷³See "Reform of the Legislative Council" *Ceylon National Review* Vol.II, No. 4 July 1907.

⁷⁴ *Ceylon National Review* July 1906 p1. Note the careful balance of Christian (Pieris), Moor (Rahiman), Buddhist (Gunaratna) and Tamil (Coomaraswamy), interests. Most of these either were fairly sympathetic to the Theosophical Society or were members.

While not a TS organisation, its formation and membership has TS fingerprints all over it. The personalities behind the Society were people like Mrs Musaeus Higgins, Principal of the BTS Musaeus College, Peter de Abrew, manager of Musaeus College and prominent Colombo businessman, and, of course, Woodward himself.⁷⁵ While their organisational contribution is acknowledged, they remain ‘servers’ on the periphery, promoting leadership by indigenous personalities. Again, Woodward’s influence tended to be diffuse and to present through the people he influenced.

Woodward became firm friends with AK Coomaraswamy, and often stayed with him and his first wife. Together they founded⁷⁶ the Social Reform Society’s *Ceylon National Review*, and edited it along with the Colombo-based intellectual figure and prominent pioneer writer, WA de Silva, also previously associated with the temperance movement. It was an enduring relationship, and Woodward continued to regard Coomaraswamy as “a being of great artistic genius”,⁷⁷ an opinion generally shared in the academic field, though he was, of course, not without his critics. Correspondence between Woodward and Coomaraswamy continued until Coomaraswamy’s death in 1947; the usual small post cards and cryptic notes Coomaraswamy was in the habit of sending people.

⁷⁵ These TS connections and organisational foundations are made explicit in the outline of the formation of the CSRS in the *Ceylon National Review* July 1906, p1.

⁷⁶ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 10 November 1942. (FOSL box 14.) “He and I started the *Ceylon National Review* (now defunct) about 1907 in Ceylon.” Actually it was started in 1906.

⁷⁷ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 12 December 1947. (FOSL box 14). See also: Woodward, FL. “The Genius” in Durai Raja Singham [ed] *Homage to Ananda K Coomaraswamy: A Garland of Tributes* pp 154-156.

AK Coomaraswamy was a polymath who made his mark initially in geology, before branching into oriental art, religion and archaeology. He was a larger-than-life figure who even died a notable death, deliberately choosing to walk out into the garden of his Boston home, to die lying on the grass, a Hindu death close to the soil. He was a man of great depth and sensitivity whom Woodward remembered fondly, relating how at one time, about 1905, when he was staying with Coomaraswamy near Kandy, Coomaraswamy received a gift of two enormous 'art' vases from a local dealer. Coomaraswamy was appalled at a gift of such horrid kitsch, but was unable to refuse without offence. After much discussion, Woodward took "them down the garden and accidentally dropped them, [raising] a cry of lamentation. We buried them by night."⁷⁸ It was a Woodward solution, albeit couched in much amusement, and Coomaraswamy was relieved of responsibility for their disposal.

This unlikely pair were hardly the stuff of revolution, and nor were they. They were men of idealism whose views on national advancement encompassed, as the *Ceylon National Review* reveals, ideas of all persuasions, from basket weaving to coin collecting, and occasionally politics. It was, after all, the *Social Reform Society*, and these were people unable to see the nation outside of a moral, cultural and aesthetic setting. One of the ideas Woodward used the CNR to promote was the matter of cremation, not necessarily a cause one would wish to die for, but one nevertheless strongly held by Woodward, who wrote numerous articles, and later issued a tract on the matter,⁷⁹ a particularly nineteenth century mode of discourse, with its antecedents reaching back into the

⁷⁸ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 1 November 1947.(FOSL box 14)

Enlightenment, to Tom Paine and others who fanned the flames of dissent with their pamphlets. By the mid twentieth century this had become the mode of cranks and obsessional oddities, unable to access the mainstream press, though Woodward's use owes more to earlier antecedents.

Woodward's support of cremation was part of championing national culture but, as with so many issues of this kind, it harboured a TS agenda, another example of where agendas conveniently aligned. Woodward, like many other Theosophical personalities, collected through conviction or simply association, a number of other peripheral causes that held the attention. Vegetarianism was not unexpected given the TS connection, and similarly vehement opinions regarding animal welfare were also in the TS catalogue of causes, though they were also views that dwelt well with local Buddhist opinion.

A story is told of Woodward taking a hackney, a cart drawn by one of the minuscule Sri Lankan bullocks, from the Fort to Mahinda Hill, the school construction site. Along the way, the bullock earned the driver's ire and he began to beat the animal. After offering a scathing rebuke to the driver, Woodward descended the cart and continued on foot. Whether or not his views were assumed by association with the TS, they were nonetheless held by Woodward with conviction and some passion.

Similarly Woodward adopted strong convictions regarding cremation, very much a TS cause. Though a common place idea today, cremation in the mid nineteenth century was a novelty in the West, and it was through the efforts of Olcott and the TS in the USA that the issue was turned into

⁷⁹ Gunewardene p81.

a *cause celebre*, eventually leading to its general acceptance. The death in 1876 of a TS member, Baron de Palm, (who turned out to be a fraud), provided the catalyst, for his dying wish was to be cremated - the first to take place in America. Olcott played the issue with his usual feel for publicity, and the controversy and public outrage became intense. Eventually, the cremation took place on 6 December 1876, but without the expected publicity. In a macabre twist, the Brooklyn Theatre burned down the same day, incinerating 200 people alive and, as Olcott dryly observed, "The greater cremation weakened the public interest in the lesser one".⁸⁰

Woodward, following his mentor, Olcott, promoted the cause in Ceylon where Christian missionary activity had seen some shift in attitude away from traditional cremation to burial among most cultural and religious groups, and obviously among Christian converts. Burial among Christians and Muslims, as Woodward observed,⁸¹ derived from religious beliefs concerning the Last Trump, the literal Resurrection from the grave and the Judgement of the Dead. Woodward suggests it had never been, apart from some exceptions among the nobility of the Kandyan Kingdom, a feature of Sinhala culture till the time of the missionaries. His arguments in favour of cremation are largely based on sanitary concerns, precious land use and the threat of disease contagion, with some allusion to the nineteenth century obsessional fear of burial alive, the horror of which Edgar Allan Poe captured eloquently in his short stories.

⁸⁰Murphet, H. *Yankee Beacon of Buddhist Light- Life of Col. Henry S. Olcott* (Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Books, Theosophical Publishing House, 1988) p75.

⁸¹Woodward, FL "Cremation" *Ceylon National Review* July 1907 Vol. II No. 4. Organ of the *Ceylon Social Reform Society*. Edited by AK Coomaraswamy, FL Woodward & WA de Silva. Colombo Apothecaries Co. Ltd. p 67.

Beyond these arguments, Woodward, quoting Olcott, poses the core of the issue in the form of a test the matter must pass - is cremation "a really scientific method".⁸² This seemed always to be Olcott's concern though it is a question that echoes through many nineteenth century preoccupations - is it rational, scientific, and most importantly, progressive? These terms became almost synonymous. Despite a preoccupation with things occult, with matters of considerable emotional and psychological intensity, issues of concern among the TS were frequently couched in the language of scientific rationality and 'progressive' thought. Cremation was thus, another of those issues that had to pass this ultimate test in order to properly exercise the mind of any 'thinking' person.

The *Ceylon National Review* did attempt to address political reform but in a manner that today would be regarded as particularly cautious and conservative. Woodward's attempt to define a political manifesto, *The True Aristocracy*, takes on many aspects of a headmaster's moral imposition, and owes more to Plato's *Republic* - which Karl Popper⁸³ has characterised as the foundation of modern despotism - than any more recent political philosophy.

Woodward's position is clear:

'government by the best' is the only real and ideal method of ordering the world, not the rule of the absolute monarch, nor yet that of the many-headed multitude which we wrongly call democracy.⁸⁴

⁸² Woodward "Cremation" *CNR*, p70.

⁸³ Popper, K. *The Open Society and Its Enemies Vol II: Plato*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966)

⁸⁴ Woodward, FL "The True Aristocracy" *National Monthly of Ceylon* February-March 1913, p44.

The 'higher democracy' Woodward sees as rule of the 'best', the true aristocrats. This elitist, oligarchic view obviously regards the equality of humankind as "the greatest fallacy ever entertained".⁸⁵ It is a view harking back to a 'Golden Age', which Woodward saw as literal and "not a mere utopian dream", and from which humankind has degenerated into an infantile irresponsibility.

His remedy for "our social ills" involves firstly, a 'doctrine of brotherhood', wherein the those more 'evolved' teach the younger; secondly, a 'doctrine of evolution', wherein progress of one life through many forms is recognised (reincarnation); and thirdly, a 'doctrine of Karma, wherein we reap what we sow. Grasping these doctrines would induce beings to uplift rather than crush, to display self-control, and give rise to a "social conscience which scarcely yet exists..."⁸⁶ The point of his schema is to render mistaken a 'one man, one vote' view. Rather, he proposes, a 'graded vote' of villages voting for village representatives, who then vote for representatives at a higher level, ultimately leading to an educated and 'wise' council.

However it may be couched in 'New Age' vocabulary, it remains (as Woodward acknowledges) Plato's *Republic* with all its totalitarian inference. It is one of the paradoxes of the TS that it encompassed values of the extreme Left and Right, wherein its influence can be traced through the occult creations of the Third Reich as well as the radical experiments of the Bauhaus. Woodward, similarly embraces these contradictions of liberality and conservatism. Woodward's occasional but emphatic, "I'm

⁸⁵ Woodward "The True Aristocracy" p44.

⁸⁶ Woodward "The True Aristocracy" p45.

not going to have every vulgar little tinker dictating to *me!*",⁸⁷ is probably a more explicit encapsulation of his Tory political philosophy than anything. What redeems Woodward, always, from stodgy conservatism, is his lively imagination, his genuine concern and tolerance of others, and his inability to take himself or anything else, too seriously. Nothing was safe from humour, even his firmly held views on vegetarianism⁸⁸.

All sins are transformed into Enlightenment- Holy! Holy! Holy!
But I love a couple of kippers [for] my breakfast.⁸⁹

Woodward's commitment to national values, however, was deeply felt, all-embracing, and driven by the familiar Victorian values of Duty and Service.

...Nationalism is a *Life*. It is a life of service for the nation. That means a life of doing Duty.....If you would be a true nationalist then, you must ask yourself what is your Duty to others.⁹⁰

Woodward assumed seriously these sentiments of nationalism and exercised them through the school and his many ancillary activities. This is not nationalism as we have come to know it, with its highly political agendas, but a nationalism that moves on a broad social front. In this, Woodward's contribution was definite and persuasive, even if largely exercised from the periphery, allowing the others to assume centre stage.

Woodward's legacy - 'The Old Boy Network'.

Woodward's basic reliance on the Public School model for education at Mahinda College produced an important by-product of significance in

⁸⁷ Pearce "Si Monumentum..." p7.

⁸⁸ Woodward, FL "Review of Henry Salt 'The Logic of Vegetarianism' " *Ceylon National Review* July 1906 p247.

⁸⁹Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 14 August 1947. (FOSL.)

⁹⁰ 'Labor Omnia Vincit' [probably Woodward] "Playing with Fire" *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. III, No. 4 August 1915, p10.

determining the national importance of Woodward and Mahinda College. One aspect of spread of the public school model, both in England and elsewhere, was the emergence of 'Old Boy' associations (OBAs) in the period 1870-1890,⁹¹ which became effective instruments of influence and upward mobility among the burgeoning middle class.

Woodward, educated within that 'tradition', established a Mahinda Old Boys Association in 1911⁹² and remained chairman of it during his tenure as principal. It still exists today and remains a powerful influence on, and resource for, the school. In many ways the OBA structure remains stronger in Sri Lanka today than it does generally in the west, another example of where "traditions" borrowed from the centre, where they have often long since declined in importance or passed out of use, tend to persist in the periphery. OBAs, alumni associations and 'Alte Herren' were originally a powerful

means of establishing common patterns of behaviour and values, but also a set of interlinked networks....a strong web of intergenerational stability and continuity.⁹³

In a country like colonial Ceylon, these networks were as important as they were in England, providing influence, connections and intergenerational mentoring, the all important 'leg up' in politics, business or the bureaucracy. Put less euphemistically, the "strong web of intergenerational stability and continuity" could become blatant favouritism and nepotistic advancement of the 'old school tie', what

⁹¹Hobsbawm, E "Mass Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914" in Hobsbawm, E & Ranger, T. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p295.

⁹²"Old Boys' Day Celebrations" *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol III, No. 3 September 1917, p 26. The OBA was formed on the 9 October 1910, but the first committee meeting took place on 30 January 1911. MCOBA News Vol.1 No.3 December 1996.

⁹³Hobsbawm, E "Mass Producing Traditions..." p293.

Hobsbawm bluntly describes as a “potential mafia...for mutual aid”⁹⁴ beyond local or regional kin. While this pejorative characterisation is often the view today in the West, it is easy to forget that these networks helped overcome the resistance of prior networks of interest, and that mentoring, of whatever kind, is an essential aspect of advancement despite the exaggerated emphasis and mythical aspects of ability based promotion.⁹⁵ In Ceylon’s case this network of OBA influence was overlaid with the values of emerging nationalism and those of the Buddhist Revival. The country’s elite was then, and remains today, surprisingly small and wields power disproportionately to the remainder of society. The networking roots of this elite frequently involved the various OBAs, so once again, the influence of the school reached well beyond the school gates, magnifying its influence and ideology.

The BTS schools were founded in an atmosphere hostile to their formation, hampered by deliberately obstructionist government regulation, lack of finance, and lack of communal enthusiasm. Despite that, they fulfilled the important function of breaking the Christian monopoly, no mean achievement, but more importantly “they built up an enviable tradition and record of service.”

Their alumni made their influence felt ...in politics and education, helping to quicken the pace of political agitation, generating more enlightened attitudes in social and economic issues, and engendering a pride in Buddhism, the Sinhalese language and the cultural heritage associated with these.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Hobsbawm, E *Age of Empire* (New York: Vintage Random House, 1989) p179

⁹⁵ This is not to suggest that ability is not a principal consideration, only that networked contacts are very often more compelling considerations. Women, for instance, have frequently suffered in promotion through lack of mentors and networks.

⁹⁶ de Silva, KM, *A History of Sri Lanka* p347.

While Mahinda College has produced significant personalities in politics, religion, academic achievement, cricket and social contribution, the lists one could provide would be little different than that which could be provided by any long established Public School. There are figures of Mahinda like Dr SA Wickramasinghe, one of “the most outstanding leftist leaders of Sri Lanka”,⁹⁷ whose career spanned half a century and profoundly influenced the Labour union and nationalist movements. Wickramasinghe, like many early Nationalists, was influenced by Gandhi and joined him in one of the famous ‘salt marches’.⁹⁸

There was also Henry Woodward Amarasuriya (1904-1981), Woodward’s name-sake, who became a significant figure in the first DS Senanayake UNP (United National Party) government as Trade Minister. Amarasuriya, an astute businessman and owner of the huge Citrus Estate of 2166⁹⁹ acres near Galle, skilfully secured better tea prices by taking sales out of the control of Mincing Lane. He also took the cinnamon trade out of foreign control and devised financial schemes to capitalise export trade ventures and to ‘Ceylonise’ business.¹⁰⁰

Amarasuriya was not only named after Woodward but was also taught by him. When his father, Henry, died, Woodward wrote to the Ven. Seelakkhanda, the Nayaka Thera of the Kalyanavamsa Nikaya, and leading early figure in the Buddhist Revival, expressing his sorrow and suggesting, “Of course, I shall take charge of his young children in particular, as I regard myself as a member of his family, and am bound to

⁹⁷ Vitharana Ms p83.

⁹⁸ Jayawardene, K “Origins of the Left Movement in Sri Lanka” *Modern Ceylon Studies* Vol. 3 No. 2 1973.

⁹⁹ Roberts, N *Galle: As Quiet As Asleep* p242.

¹⁰⁰ Fernando, L. “Amarasuriya as Trade Minister” *Ceylon Daily News* 5/5/81. Pkt 8027 SLNA.

care for the orphans he left behind, to the best of my ability.”¹⁰¹ Woodward may have been well intentioned but somewhat presumptuous, as the family was a clan with financial and dynastic concerns that would have rebuffed his interference, despite his previous standing and obvious affection in the eyes of Henry. Once the patriarch was dead, other patriarchal elements, in this case, Henry’s relative Tantulus (‘Tatty’) Amarasuriya, quickly assumed a determining role including the management of the school. Little is said about this time (1916-1919) except that Tantulus had ‘pressing’ business considerations that limited his time for the school, which may be code for indifference or even antagonism. Woodward obviously did not enjoy the same support from him and this may have been a contributing factor to his eventually leaving Ceylon, though that remains supposition.

Henry Woodward Amarasuriya inherited from his father over 2500 acres of cultivated tea, rubber and coconut around Galle and 1500 acres of uncultivated land at Deniyaya. He, like his father, was a major philanthropist and supported not only Mahinda College but 37 other Buddhist schools. Later in life he even gave the large family home at Unawatuna to the government as a Women’s Teachers College. He joined the Ceylon National Congress in 1923 and won the seat of Udagama at 26 in the first election under the Donoughmore Constitution in 1931. He was a founding member of the UNP in 1946 and was Commerce & Trade Minister in the first Independence cabinet of 1948.¹⁰² Despite his obvious imagination and administrative abilities, Amarasuriya was a poor

¹⁰¹ Letter FL Woodward to Ven Seelakkhanda 3 October 1916, SLNA. Cited in Gurugé, *From the Fountains of Buddhism* p446.

¹⁰² File RG 25.79/1 SLNA.

orator and lacked a political 'killer instinct'. Vilified by his political opponents as an exploitative capitalist, he lost office in the 1956.

The Amarasuriya family was steeped in philanthropy and in the habit of *dana*, charity. Each week, the poor of the Galle district would gather in front of the family home and be given a little money, enough for a poor person to live on.¹⁰³ While one could ascribe political motives, Amarasuriya genuinely regarded it as a sincere duty. It was though, of course, almost feudal, and easily twisted by envy and resentment into opposition, particularly among the beneficiaries of his largesse.

Despite the bitterness of politics, there was considerable gratitude for his contributions and assistance over the years. To mark his 75th birthday the Mahinda College OBA organised a *pirit* ceremony in his honour at the local *vihara* (temple). Afterwards, Amarasuriya, despite his blindness and infirmity, invited everyone (about fifty people) to his home where a family celebration was to be held. People mingled and ate, and as the evening lengthened, Amarasuriya ensconced himself on an elevated platform with a pile of Rs5/- notes on one side of him and Rs10/- on the other. Most were a little puzzled by this but, as each came to leave, pressing their palms together in traditional salutation, Henry Woodward Amarasuriya gave each his blessing and a Rs5/- and Rs10/- note (about 75¢) from the pile on either side of him, even to one Old Boy who was himself a millionaire.¹⁰⁴ It had been a very long time since even the poor could survive on Rs5/- a week but the value was immaterial, the habit and gesture were ingrained.

¹⁰³Personal conversation with Dr V Vitharana.

¹⁰⁴Personal conversation with Dr V Vitharana. The story is told with much amusement but also extreme affection.

This habit of *dana*, philanthropy and lay religious exercise, while culturally commonplace, is nevertheless a notable feature of many Old Boys of the College, a significant example of which is the deeply respected Albert Edirisighe, whose optometry shops are ubiquitous in Colombo. Edirisighe is President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, a Buddhist ‘missionary’ organisation that supports Buddhist activity worldwide.¹⁰⁵ Again, the feature is an intense lay adherence, fervent Sinhala nationalism, and commitment to Buddhist practice in daily life, aspects Woodward espoused and encouraged.¹⁰⁶

Probably the most outstanding example of the “Woodward Tradition” is the founder of the Sarvodaya movement, Dr AT Ariyaratne, a winner of the prestigious Gandhi Peace Prize. Sarvodaya, ‘welfare or awakening for all’¹⁰⁷ is a concept of community and village development that Ariyaratne, inspired by Gandhi, blended with a lay Buddhist commitment, drawn from Dharmapala and Woodward, to produce a development program with a profound Buddhist inflection. The form of Buddhism is one Woodward would recognise with approval: a laicised enacted faith largely removed from involvement with the *Sangha*; a commitment to duty and service, and a firm commitment to understanding and tolerance—unfortunately *not* a notable feature of Dharmapala¹⁰⁸ - that deliberately

¹⁰⁵Bond, GD *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1992) p119.

¹⁰⁶I am indebted to the help of Albert Edirisighe and his family.

¹⁰⁷Gandhi translated the Sanskrit as “welfare for all” (*sarva*=all; *udaya*=rising). Ariyaratne favours “awakening for all”, though the philological basis, as Gombrich points out [*Buddhism Transformed* p245], is doubtful.

¹⁰⁸ While other commentators have illustrated examples of Dharmapala’s intolerance, racism, bigotry and anti-Semitism, the files on him in the SLNA also provide many examples. He had a tendency to vacillate between defiance of colonial administration, and, fear and hurt; “I am misunderstood”, he states in one letter to the administration. He seemed a man genuinely scared of administrative retribution (a not unreasonable concern as they gaoled the printer of one of his articles for obscenity) and, even though he was prevented from returning to Ceylon for a time, there seemed

ignores caste and ethnic barriers, and avoids proselytising.¹⁰⁹ While Ariyaratne publicly nominates as figures of inspiration Gandhi and Dharmapala, he takes for granted - and reveres - the acknowledged private influence of Woodward and the 'Woodwardian Tradition' of Mahinda College.¹¹⁰

Sarvodaya began as a voluntary project of Colombo students working in a low caste *Rodiya* village in remote Sri Lanka and has developed into a multi-faceted program of orphanages, assistance to children with hearing and other disabilities, village maternity and pre-school programs, village water programs, vocational training for youth, and the list goes on. If Woodward were to wish for any memorial, it would be in the satisfaction he would undoubtedly feel in the success of the Sarvodaya. Woodward believed the only way to solve the "deep discontent with life, is to do good", for the "surest way to progress is to serve the world."¹¹¹ And while Gombrich and Obeyesekere suggest that much,

of what has been written on Sarvodaya is by good-hearted but naïve Western intellectuals who see the movement in terms of their own utopian fantasies of a benevolent social order,¹¹²

that is precisely the reason it would so appeal to a person like Woodward. That it strives after ideals that often founder on the shoals of human

little enthusiasm to return when he could - he liked western adoration and continued to fear administrative reprisals. RG65/255 (security and confidential files) SLNA.

¹⁰⁹For a critical view of Sarvodaya, see,

Kantowsky, D *Sarvodaya: the Other Development*. (Delhi: Vikas, 1980)

For Ariyaratna's own distillation of viewpoint, see

AT Ariyaratna *In Search of Development* (Colombo, Moratuwa: Sarvodaya Press, 1981.)

For other works on Sarvodaya, see:

Macy, J. *Dharma and Development: Religion as a Resource in the Sarvodaya Self-Help Movement*. (West Hartford, Conn.: Kumarian Press 1983.)

Bond, GD *The Buddhist Revival in Ceylon* p241ff.

¹¹⁰Personal conversations with Dr Ariyaratne, Moratuwa May 1997 and May 1998.

¹¹¹ Gunewardene *FL Woodward*. p84.

nature would be the challenge, not the reason for avoiding its possibilities. For Woodward, who believed fervently in the coming *Metteyya* Buddha, there was a clear view of those “Who shall behold Him”.

Those who give gifts, keep the precepts, observe the Sabbaths, do their duties, plant trees and dig gardens for the people, build bridges, clear the roads and dig wells; those who further the Buddha-dhamma, who honour parents and elders; in short, those who definitely seek the welfare of others, forgetting self, shall hear the Dhamma of Metteya and attain their goal.¹¹³

These are the goals and orientation of Sarvodaya, whatever other criticism may be levelled at the organisation.

Sarvodaya has had a profound influence on other organisations and governments desirous of turning it to their own purpose. UNP President Premadasa,¹¹⁴ who was later assassinated, took great pains to inveigle Ariyaratne’s support and collusion, such was the stature of the movement, but this political involvement was rejected, much to Premadasa’s annoyance. The significance of this action, and the intensity of Sri Lankan politics, can be seen in the fact that attempts were later made to assassinate Ariyaratne, including one by a police official who came to Ariyaratne’s home, but recoiled from the intention once he confronted his victim.¹¹⁵

Gombrich and Obeyesekere view Sarvodaya critically as “both naïve and unrealistic, with little hope of success once the massive support from aid

¹¹²Gombrich, R & Obeyesekere, G *Buddhism Transformed : Religious change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), p243.

¹¹³ Woodward, FL. “Metteya Bodhisattva- The Coming Buddha” *New Lanka* Vol. II No. 2 January 1951, p37. This is a canonical quotation, and, though not Woodward’s words, they are his sentiments. I have adhered to Woodward’s spellings.

¹¹⁴Premadasa was given Woodward’s beautifully carved and heavy ebony chair, another of the ‘relics’ retained of Woodward. It has since been returned to the property of the school.

¹¹⁵Personal conversation with Dr Ariyaratne.

donors is withdrawn”.¹¹⁶ There is no doubt the organisation is heavily dependent on aid, but it is heavily dependent also on the extensive grassroots networks of trained people that have been created and which profoundly compound the effect of the movement at village level. This is the permanent legacy of Sarvodaya, foreign aid or no foreign aid. Whether the organisation is “naïve and unrealistic” is impossible to objectify, though, while intended as critical, it is a comment that would cheer a person like Woodward immensely. He had no objection to dream castles in the air so long as some attention was paid to establishing foundations underneath.

Gombrich and Obeyesekere are also critical of the bourgeois nature of the Sarvodaya, dominated in its management, the *Sangamaya*, by an educated urban middle class, frequently originating from the South, around Galle and Matara, “precisely the area that produced practically allwho were active in the early stages of the Buddhist resurgence and the Sinhalese nationalist movement.”¹¹⁷ This is undeniable and points to the significance and prevailing influence of Woodward and the Mahinda College experience, the sole “pillar” of Buddhist education in the South. It has been an important centre of training for the middle class upwardly mobile Buddhist enthusiast, bearing in mind middle class upward mobility was no less an aspect of Woodward’s Victorian baggage. More than anything else, however, many of these are probably Old Boys of the school. While many of the *Sangamaya* are now probably Colombo based, nearly all would have been from more modest Southern origins. What is significant is the characteristic middle class upward mobility, the

¹¹⁶Gombrich and Obeyesekere p 245.

aspect which so commonly accompanies the puritan, zealous, reformist inclination, sometimes manifesting as fundamentalism, in whatever culture.

As in Europe, the upwardly mobile middle class brought in their wake an enthusiasm for social engineering, uplifting others who do not necessarily wish to be uplifted. It is an aspect so ingrained in modern western culture as to be commonplace, and thus an unseen assumption, both among enthusiasts and critics alike. The middle class is the “interfering class” in whatever culture, and in whatever mode, it “knows best”, even when criticising others for interfering. To criticise Sarvodaya for emulating some of the more irritating habits of its western counterparts is simply to draw attention to some unavoidable baggage that can only be contained by mindfulness, never eliminated.

What Gombrich and Obeyesekere particularly note is the inclination in Ariyaratne to ‘invent tradition’, in the sense to which Hobsbawm alludes, and reinterpret traditional cultural and philosophical views, probably unconsciously, to serve his own purpose. But, as Hobsbawm has indicated, this type of process became particularly prevalent in late nineteenth century England at the moment of greatest middle class expansion in political and social influence, and where the (perceived) pace of change inclined people to seek assurance and justification from the past for their future direction. That a similar constellation of elements are observable within the cultural basis of Sarvodaya is hardly surprising, though what particularly concerns Gombrich and Obeyesekere are the more overt examples.

¹¹⁷Kantowsky, D *Sarvodaya* p187. Also cited in Gombrich and Obeyesekere p 247.

The “invented tradition” of the activist and involved monk in Sarvodaya is quite contrary, in their view, to the Theravada tradition of the *arahant*, the aloof, detached, contemplative, and is more akin to the Mahayana *Bodhisattva* (compassionate) ideal.¹¹⁸ This is a valid observation, that confirms one of the more subtle aspects of Woodward’s influence and that of the Theosophical Society personalities whose views he shared. Woodward, while respectful of many individual monks and scholars (like Rev. Buddhadatta, Malalasekera and Woodward’s friend, Mudaliyar Ratnatunga), did not hold the *Sangha* in high regard. He strongly objected to their conservative orthodoxy and heavy hand on any aspect of scripture - “Really, they object to our translations and all Caroline [Rhys Davids’s] work as heretical. Well - Let them go to *avici*[Hell].”¹¹⁹ No matter how otherwise circumspect Woodward was, he reveals here a passionate objection to orthodoxy and the heavy hand of the *Sangha*.

This anti-clericalism pervaded his educational approach, not openly, but in his strong lay advocacy and the way he strongly urged his students to take the faith into their own hands. His was always an urge to laicisation and one’s own interpretation, which is the epitome of Protestant biblicism and the return to the “original” scriptures, an aspect that pervades religious reformism. Woodward was a reformist not bound by orthodox restraints, a sentiment that Dr Ariyaratne would no doubt recognise, while nevertheless drawing on early scriptural reference for justification.

¹¹⁸Gombrich and Obeyesekere p 254. The image of the Theravada monk is one of detachment from worldly ties and the strife of human interaction and there are very strict injunctions about such involvement by Theravada monks. Gombrich is right to suggest the Sarvodaya and Mahayanist model would disturb many villagers as contrary to tradition, but what will be interesting is to see whether this newly defined tradition will assume acceptance for, as Hobsbawm has stated, a tradition is only the gap in memory of one generation (ie 10-20yrs), a relatively rapid transformation of perception.

¹¹⁹Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 15 July 1950 (FOSL) *avici*- one of the Buddhist hells.

Woodward felt no such restraint. He made it clear, for instance, that he regarded the later *Abhidhamma*, and later canonical *Commentaries* of Buddhaghosa as “mostly tripe”.¹²⁰ The *Abhidhamma* he thought, produced “a Scotch type of Buddhism- ‘sound in doctrine’ [but it] gives me the intellectual belly-ache.”¹²¹ Woodward’s was an activist, not contemplative, Buddhism.

Woodward was attracted to the *Bodhisattva* ideal, and the coming of *Metteyya*, the Buddha of love and compassion,¹²² very Mahayanist emphases, though not exclusively. Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, in his preface to Woodward’s translation of the *Dhammapada*, describes Woodward as a Mahayanist¹²³ and Woodward accepts this characterisation in his letters to IB Horner, though Woodward is chronically difficult to tie down as he probably would be comfortable only in his own categories. He certainly found the Mahayana-leaning *Middle Way*, the journal of the British Buddhist Society, “Mostly wind. This Mahayana gassing does not appeal to me.”¹²⁴ His definition of himself as a Mahayanist obviously hinged on an emphasis on *Metteyya* Buddha and the *Bodhisattva* ideal, hardly the extent of Mahayana doctrine.

His doctrinal description of himself as Mahayanist seemed more to depend on that fact he had nowhere else to retreat, once he rejected

¹²⁰Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 7 September 1949. Also 20 June 1949. (FOSL.)

¹²¹Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner, 24 March 1948. (FOSL.)

¹²²Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 3 May 1951. Also 15 July 1950 (FOSL.)

¹²³ Woodward, FL. *The Buddha’s Path of Virtue: A translation of the Dhammapada* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1921) from the *Forward* by Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam pxix

¹²⁴Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 24 March 1948. (FOSL.) This is an odd comment by Woodward as the *Middle Ways*, as Woodward called them, belonged to a Buddhist organisation strongly influenced by Christmas Humphries and the Theosophical Society.

Theravadin orthodoxy and made clear his lack of enthusiasm for *bhikkhus* and the *Sangha*,....

the time has passed for monks to come to the west bearing robes and surrounded by supporters, and shut up in a cocoon of prejudices- Mustn't do this! or that! I am holy!! The West has had enough of monkery. They (the *bhikkhus*) imagine that if the Bodhisattva appeared, he would come as a monk!¹²⁵

His was an activist vision of service, duty and work, a Buddhism of involvement, not contemplation. This is not to say he abhorred the detached model since that is precisely what he himself became in later life, but he saw the mass of monks, apart from the scholars he admired, more as freeloaders than contributing to the benefit of others. This was a particularly Victorian vision where "the devil makes work for idle hands" and required a full schedule of involvement. It was also the TS version of Buddhism which so influenced Dharmapala. Thus within the acknowledged foundations of Sarvodaya, its shape becomes coherent: the influences were the activist model of Gandhi, which is also the 'Mahayana', or, really, 'Protestant', Buddhism of Woodward and the TS, blended with the activist layman model of Dharmapala.

The influences that have moulded the various periods of the Buddhist Revival in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are obviously many and varied, and as much garbled as coherent. What is clear in the work of most commentators is the critical role played by the South in the nationalist and Buddhist movements, and in such organisations as Sarvodaya. While there are historical influences reaching into the early nineteenth century and before, the shape of that movement, in the early

¹²⁵Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 30 April 1949 (FOSL.)

twentieth century, owes a considerable debt to the influence of FL Woodward and Mahinda College, for while Woodward was just one of many who followed Olcott's mission to Ceylon, he was "perhaps the greatest of them all".¹²⁶

Even though he joked about it, Woodward was clearly aware of his role in this historical formation and wrote in 1949, after a visit by two Sinhala Buddhist teachers on exchange in Australia, "They tell me of [a] great religious Revival (B.) in Ceylon. My statue may be unveiled later on."¹²⁷ If he had lived to see the effects of that revival his response might have been more sober, though he would have been greatly buoyed by the experience of Sarvodaya.

¹²⁶ Woodward, FL. *The Buddha's Path of Virtue: A translation of the Dhammapada* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1921) from the *Forward* by Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam pxix.

¹²⁷Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 26 March 1949. (FOSL.)

Leaving Ceylon.

The rain it raineth every day
Upon the just and unjust fellers
But more upon the just, because
the unjust pinch the just's umbrellas!¹

The basis of Woodward's regard among his students and the local community, however misunderstood on occasions, was not difficult to understand. His extraordinary efforts to built the school and his financial contribution are obvious. Endearing, too, was his gentle, inviting personality, and sense of mischief and fun. He was also responsible for aspects of the school agenda, which had profound national implications. The importance of his advocacy of Sinhala and Buddhist culture, language, and belief is easy to pass over unless one comprehends the extent to which language, religion, dress and other cultural attributes were dismissed as remnants of an 'inferior and primitive' past, and subject to denigration and ridicule by those embracing 'civilised' Western values.

Even in modern Sri Lanka, that has passed through a substantial and strident anti-colonial nationalism, there remains a residue of cultural self-consciousness, expressed either as defensiveness or embarrassed apology, for cultural attributes and values that require no apology. For Woodward to argue, at that time, for the retention of national culture represented a significant authoritative endorsement. The cumulative effect of his educational style, his valorisation of culture, language and religion - particularly his introduction of scriptural translations into the school and his advocacy of lay involvement in religious and national affairs - was to have a profound effect on the shape of the religious and nationalist movements that emerged after he left Ceylon. While ex-students and Old

¹ FL Woodward to IB Horner 11 January 1947 (FOSL)

Boys speak with fond sentiment of the “Woodwardian Tradition”, it was they who were the vectors of Woodward’s values and approach, which they carried into the heart of national involvement in the years following his departure.

Woodward always retained reservations about the future of Ceylon - “Are we fit.....?”, as the cartoon retained on the blackboard still states. He would no doubt despair at the cultural and religious chauvinism that has corrupted the nationalism he espoused, yet he, too, contributed to its creation. Ceylon was a ‘country of cultures’ before it was ever a ‘nation’ or, as Russell expresses it, “less of a ‘nation’ in the European sense than a confederation of communities”,² where the attributes of the various cohabiting cultures had generally been to its overall economic and social advantage. The nationalist movement, based on the European ideology of the nation-state and its exaggerated valuation of cultural and geographic homogeneity and distinction, distorted the cultural plurality that had been Ceylon’s natural strength for centuries and it formalised tensions that had hitherto existed in uneasy stasis.

Consequences, whatever the intention, are difficult to predict, though what emerged was never the nationalism Woodward intended. But, as he said in a letter 30 July 1919, when left for Tasmania, “I have done what I wished to do and I go away leaving the seeds in the manure. They may sprout or die. It is all the same to me”³ This apparent indifference, or detachment, says much about Woodward’s attitude, but does not, I suspect, disclose all. The analogy of ‘manure’ recalls Woodward’s description of Ceylon as a ‘dunghill’ in need of true patriots to renew it;

² Russell *Communal Politics under the Donoughmore Constitution 1931-1947* ..pxiv.

³Vitharana, V. *The Message of Woodward* p7.

the description seems both scatological and descriptive of potential fertility, and that seems to encompass Woodward's ambivalence. There was both affection and disappointment in his experience of Ceylon.

In unearthing information about Woodward in Ceylon, old students of the Mahinda sought explanation a number of times, in discussion, for why Woodward left.⁴ There was obviously a view within oral tradition that Woodward's departure was hastened by disappointment. Certain factors can be ascertained: he did find the climate debilitating - "I found 17 years quite enough"⁵ - and preferred the cooler Tasmanian climate; and he did feel, to some extent, his work was done, and it was simply time to move on to another task, another interest.

Causation in human affairs, however, is rarely simple or singular. It is clear Woodward felt deeply the frustration of raising funds for Mahinda's building programme: "I doubt much if you'll get any cash from Ceylon-the Land of Promises if not the Promised Land",⁶...and "I know all too well what large sums are promised...but never come to anything".⁷ It is likely, though, that undermining criticism proved a more potent factor in his departure. While his experience of crisis in 1910 gives some indication of underlying community criticism, Woodward had built the school and had forged a formidable reputation, which made him difficult to oppose, whereas a person like Pearce was relatively without established power, and reaction to him seems to give a clue to Woodward's problems.

⁴ Conversations with Dr Wimaladharma, Albert Withanachchi, Albert Edirisinghe and others.

⁵ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 26 May 1948. (FOSL)

⁶ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 26 May 1948 (FOSL)

⁷ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 12 June 1945. (FOSL)

In 1917, Pearce wrote an article in the *Buddhist* on “The Beliefs of an Unbeliever”,⁸ a wonderfully apt Victorian title, and received scathing criticism and demands by readers in Tangalla (further south east of Galle) that the editor publish no further parts of the article or add “an editorial note...expressing the Buddhist view”, and suggesting the writer use a TS journal for his opinions.⁹ The criticism was savage, an extremely orthodox and anti-TS position that perceived Pearce’s views not simply as heretical but as deeply dangerous.

There can be no doubt the correspondents knew Pearce’s position at the time as Vice-Principal of Mahinda and thus their attack attached to the school, since many students attended from Tangalla. It was almost certainly an attack on Woodward by proxy. When Pearce later took up the position of principal in 1922, the same factors emerged to undermine his position and force his resignation, and there seems little doubt that Woodward was subject to the same constant undermining criticism, though he was protected by his reputation.

At some stage, Woodward simply decided he had had enough. It was a decision that would have hurt, as such criticism expressed, covertly, a profound ingratitude for his tireless efforts and, while he placed no particular store in such opinions, it nonetheless established a question in his mind as to why he should bother to persist. There was not the same zeal that had moved him in 1903, nor the same support and protection from the Board after the death of Gunaratna and Henry Amarasuriya. Little is said of the management of Tantulus Amarasuriya, other than his

⁸ Pearce, G “The Beliefs of an Unbeliever”, *The Buddhist* 11 August 1917.

⁹ N.A.W & D.P.D.R. Letter to the Editor, *The Buddhist* 18 August p5. Further critical letters appeared on 1 September 1917, pp6-8. Pearce replied on 13 October 1917, denying he was suggesting an equivalence between the *Metteyya* Buddha and the figure of Krishnamurti.

preoccupation with business matters, but it seems clear he did not offer Woodward the support he had previously enjoyed.

The irony in this persistent and corrosive conflict between the TS and orthodox Buddhists was that, in many ways, Woodward in his establishment of the school, his advocacy of national issues like language and religion, and his provision of accessible translations of the scriptures, probably did more than his critics to further the cause of the Buddhist Revival. The degree of antagonism, however, should not be surprising, since the effect of the TS on the shape of orthodoxy was not insignificant. Any re-invention of tradition assumes an unaltered 'revival' of a traditional belief. Any suggestion of neoteric elements is fiercely denied and resisted, and since the TS was the primary source of the suggested novelty, it was an inevitable focus of resentment and opposition. The TS was made to carry the projections of the reformed orthodoxy, which came to resent the TS, in some circles, even more than the dreaded Christians. Ironically, Woodward, and later Pearce, despite their valorisation of Buddhism, became subject to orthodoxy's ferocity, the strength of which is clearly visible in the peak of its influence in the mid 1950s.

The legacy Woodward retained of his Ceylon experience is diffuse, though themes tend to recur in correspondence over the years. His letters to Caroline Rhys Davids (1907-1942) and IB Horner (1942-52), though there are huge gaps and despite being mainly about the business of translation, tend often to descend into the informal and to reveal personal preoccupations, usually in the repetitions, which our children inform us, become more pronounced as we age.

Woodward's repetitions are fairly obvious: his Tory inclinations, deep suspicion of labour unions, and antipathy to Catholicism stand out, but the elements that sum his Ceylon experience lie in his oft repeated antagonism to Buddhist orthodoxy, his dislike (with some exceptions) of *bhikkhus* (monks) and 'monkery',¹⁰ and his view that the Ceylonese were unreliable and fractious, inclined to unproductive rivalry. This latter aspect is more than apparent in the preserved blackboard cartoon, but he generally reserved his criticism. In letters, though, he expressed his views with some force, something he would never have done publicly, which, of course, makes his letters all the more revealing.

In one incident in his correspondence with IB Horner, a suggestion had obviously been made for the Pali Text Society to turn over its functions to a committee in Ceylon. Woodward was adamant, "No! I would strongly object to such a move. They (in Ceylon) will say 'Give us the control of the PTS and we will pay up!' But it would be only promise."¹¹ He stated bluntly that the work of translation would be hampered by poor scholarship and disputes over orthodoxy, and that however glowing the promises it would ultimately amount to little. It had to remain, in his opinion, in the hands of European scholars, indifferent to the issue of orthodoxy. While not discounting the validity of his argument, his opinions are nonetheless scathing of the Ceylonese and reveal an underlying, disappointment with his Ceylon experience, which reads almost as a deep hurt.

¹⁰ The conjunction of anti-Catholicism and anti-'monkery' in Buddhism, may, again, be a continuing aspect of his evangelical Anglican background. It is interesting to note [Shield Heritage file], that one of Woodward's sisters became a Catholic, indicating a more conventional reaction formation to the same evangelical Anglicanism that affected Woodward.

¹¹ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 15 July 1950. (FOSL).

Whatever weight one puts on particular factors, there was obviously in Woodward's mind a distance developing in his commitment to the school and the community that indicated a time to depart. The connection with his tea estate at Akmeemana, near Galle, as a place to retire had altered with the death of Henry Amarasuriya and, in any event, it posed the difficulties of a tropical climate which Woodward found increasingly enervating. He had also always retained the idea he was 'karmically bound' to his pupils from 'past lives', but, by 1919, Woodward no longer took individual scholars and so "it appears that those for whom my Karma brought me here have ceased coming into existence here."¹² This was probably a quaint way of saying that the previously felt strong sense of purpose had diminished and that his life was growing in a different direction, altering towards other interests, for which he sought space to concentrate.

At 48 Woodward was obviously aware then, of entering into another and quite distinct phase of his life, and that may have required, in his mind, the emphasis of geography. In any case, most colonial officials did not retire 'on the job', but sought either to return to England or to settle in more temperate climes. Both Woodward's parents were dead, he had applied much of his patrimony to building the school and had never drawn a salary as Principal (only basic expenses of Rs150/-), so there was potential for only a very limited living in England. It was necessary for him to look elsewhere and Tasmania, it seems, provided the solution.

Woodward had always acknowledged the presence of "sons of the soil who could carry on the work",¹³ and always viewed it as his educational

¹²Letter from Woodward to a past pupil 30 July 1919. Gunewardene p33.

¹³Gunewardene p 34

purpose to prepare local people to manage their own affairs. By remaining in Ceylon he may have hindered his successor from managing in his own way. Ironically, he was not succeeded by a Sinhala principal, but by an Indian, Kalidas Nag, and then by F Gordon Pearce, though even well before he left, a European principal, Dr Collison,¹⁴ was contemplated.

At what point in time Woodward decided to leave Ceylon is unclear, though by June 1919 *The Buddhist* is discussing his departure and likely replacement, which means arrangements had been in train for some months. His decision appears abrupt but that may be an impression created by the lack of documentation or by the fact that Woodward had long contemplated his departure, but only announced it publicly when arrangements were in place. Gunewardene's only reflection is to suggest that once "Woodward had decided to leave...no amount of persuasion or pleading from the public or his pupils could keep him back",¹⁵ which, again, probably indicates lengthy consideration of the matter. His correspondence with Ven. Seelakkhanda, in 1916, suggested a continuing commitment to young Henry Woodward and the Amarasuriya family, which, obviously in the intervening period, has altered, probably because the clan patriarchy made his involvement unnecessary and possibly, unwelcome. The end of the War, too, with its sense of a new beginning, possibly had some effect, as would the renewed availability of shipping transport. Whatever the reasons, he was obviously firm in his resolve.

His last days at the school were filled with functions. On Friday, 26 September 1919, the whole school assembled at 3:30pm in the Olcott

¹⁴ *The Buddhist* 28 June 1919, p4.

¹⁵ Gunewardene p50.

Hall. The students were addressed by the Vice-Principal and by a senior pupil, Rufus Amarasuriya, who extolled the qualities of Woodward who had left the legacy of a finely appointed school with a reputation for learning. There were no presentations or gifts, as Woodward would accept none.

In reply, Woodward thanked the boys and masters and, in a wry back-hander, suggested that while the staff were not perfect they were as good as any principal could ever wish them to be, and he was particularly pleased so many were past pupils of the school. His view was that the school did not rest on the qualities of any one person, but on the combined “will and enthusiasm” of everyone. He urged students to “act as Buddhists” in whatever aspect of life they engaged, not to harm others, and to act as “honest upright men”, for it was not what one did but the manner in which one did it that mattered.¹⁶

The Old Boys too held a function on 29 September 1919, in which Woodward was garlanded and presented with a gold pendant set round with nine gems (*navaratna*), with the school crest and motto on one side and his name, the date and “presented by the Old Boys Association 29/9/1919”, on the other. Again it was emphasised how Woodward “had raised the College to its present position, both in the matter of buildings and educational superiority”, and he responded by urging the Old Boys to work for the welfare of the College, for its future, as Woodward clearly realised, “rested to a large extent” on them.¹⁷

¹⁶ MCOBA News. Vol 1 No.1 1996, p2. (Reprinted from the *Mahinda College Magazine* of 1920)

¹⁷ MCOBA News Vol.1 No.1 1996 p3. Also Vitharana Ms p28-29 and Gunewardene p50.

There were other receptions and 'at home' functions too. The YMBA (Young Men's Buddhist Association) - another of Olcott's creations - feted him, and the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society held a large function and presented him with an *ola* (palm) leaf "Address". Over 200 Buddhist monks of the Galle area assembled, too, at the College, to bid him farewell, the first time so many had assembled to farewell a layman.¹⁸ It was an extraordinary recognition by the *Sangha* and Buddhist establishment of Woodward's significant contribution to the promotion of the Buddhist cause, though he made it clear, in response, he did not intend taking up the robes. The monks chanted *pirit*, then presented him with Buddha Relics,¹⁹ the first ever to be taken to Tasmania, and presented him also with an *ola* leaf parchment inscribed with Pali verses in praise of his contribution to the Buddhist *Sasana*.²⁰

On 30 September, Woodward left by the evening train for Colombo, the College scouts forming a guard of honour for him at the station. The platform was crowded with students past and present, members of the Theosophical Society and other friends. As the train pulled away, the assembled crowd cheered and waved him goodbye.²¹ Several students and teachers accompanied him as far as Hikkaduwa, while two remained to keep him company up to Colombo. He stayed in the Galle Face Hotel for a week seeing, and saying farewell, to old friends before sailing on the *Plassey* on 7 October for Melbourne and Tasmania. Flags were kept flying from the school, so Woodward could see them as he was passing,

¹⁸ *The Buddhist* Saturday 4 October 1919, Colombo. p1&3.

¹⁹ These would have been small pieces of bone fragment. They were kept for a time at the Theosophical Society in Launceston and, on Woodward's death, were returned to Ceylon, but when the casket was opened, there was no evidence of the Relics.

²⁰ *The Buddhist* 4 Oct 1919 p3. Gunewardene p51. Vitharana Ms p28-29.

²¹ *The Buddhist* 4 Oct 1919 p3

and students feverishly sent wireless telegraph messages to the ship wishing him 'bon voyage'. Unfortunately the ship was late in leaving and the ship's radio did not pass on messages to passengers, so Woodward slipped quietly past Galle in the dark and silence of evening. He had taken his departure as appropriate and without significance, being simply one of the signs of inevitable change, a conscious realisation of *anicca*, the Buddhist tenet of 'impermanence'.

Farewells and regrets of absence etc., have always been meaningless to me and it would be the same also in the case of parting by death.²²

He was a man who attracted great affection and admiration, particularly from those who had an understanding of his character and the magnitude of his accomplishments, as this editorial in the *Buddhist* attests.

The present position of Mahinda College is his reward. It is an institution which he has raised to what it is and may it ever remain faithful to the ideals of the gentle mellow scholar who has given for it so much of the best years of his life.....He wielded power none the less surely because he never sought to do it of purpose. He did his work because he thought it was right and was content to pursue it without thought of what may appeal to others..... The many hundreds of youths who have passed through his hands and who hold places of trust and responsibility in the country testify to the success which has crowned his effort. ²³

Woodward was not a man of much sentimentality, though he seemed to inspire it in others, as this ode of admiration by F. Gordon Pearce attests. He attracted immense regard, admiration and affection, difficult to

²²Gunewardene p33.

²³ *The Buddhist* 4 Oct 1919, p2 Editorial. Given the occasional odd English usage the editorialist was probably Sinhala, reflecting a Sinhala point of view. He clearly knew Woodward well but it remains remarkably sober for Sinhala commentary, which, at the time, tended to spill into hyperbole. It strikes me as particularly genuine sentiment.

appreciate unless one accepts the special qualities he obviously had to engage and encompass others.

To F.L.W

Too seldom think we, gladly working here
In spacious halls upon this fair hill-crest,
By what devotion are these buildings blest,
By whose self-sacrifice wrought year by year .

We do not think of those dark days and drear
Which greeted him who came at duty's hest
Leaving all things that men proclaim life's best.
To work afar, without complaint or fear.

"Without complaint"! We turn away our gaze
From this far spot to where he lonely toiled

Ten years, unswerving, without need of praise,
Undaunted tho' by disappointment foiled.

O Best of friends and teachers! But for thee
Where would these walls, this happy concourse be?

F.G.P ²⁴

Journeying.

The *SS Plassey* which was returning some 1500 war servicemen to Australia, left Colombo on 7 October 1919 with Woodward on board. A gathering of his ex-students farewelled him from the Colombo dock but as he passed Galle, the darkness of evening denied him the frantic efforts of students sending flag semaphore and wireless messages. He described his journey to his pupils in an article published in the school magazine:²⁵ scenes of a soldier thrown overboard by his disgruntled companions for stealing; albatross circling the ship, their huge wing span making their journey effortless; gathering in the smoking room with passengers, army officers and nurses, before a fire necessitated by the cold that descended

²⁴ *The Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* Colombo, Bastain & Co. Vol.1, No.2, 1921, p31.

This particular piece was reprinted from the *Mahinda College Magazine*, Vol. IV No.2 April 1920. It is included as an illustration of the regard that Woodward attracted, not for literary merit. There are several other examples of this type of grandiose poesy, but one example will suffice. See also *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.IV No.7 December 1926, p6 "To Vanapala" - a piece of doggerel where each line begins with a letter that spells out "FL Woodward" down the page.

²⁵ Woodward, FL. "My Voyage to Tasmania" *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.IV No.2, 20 April 1920, p 11ff.

after they had crossed the equator and steamed south; afternoon cricket on the upper deck netted around for the purpose, but unable to contain the raucous bellowing of the players; and, concerts and ‘sing-songs’ about the piano or “P an’ O’s”, as Woodward suggested, unable to avoid the excruciating pun.

Woodward spent most of his time reading, playing chess and observing the soldiers on the crowded lower deck, cooking, washing up, playing cards. After about eleven days the boat arrived at Freemantle, WA, an “uninteresting small sea-port”, where the boat was assailed by mothers, wives and girl friends straining for a glimpse of their loved ones before disembarkation. The boat sailed on to Adelaide, where disembarkation was refused because of the world influenza epidemic, and then to Melbourne where Woodward finally came ashore. He was met by officious customs and health inspectors who eyed suspiciously his boxes of books, which “alone weighed one ton”. In Melbourne Woodward met up with Jinarajadasa,²⁶ an important Sinhala figure in the TS who was on a speaking tour of Australia, and who would meet up again with Woodward when he travelled to Tasmania.

After a week in Melbourne, Woodward, on 30 October, 1919, boarded the ferry, *Loongana* for the seventeen hour journey across Bass Strait to Launceston. He awoke early the next morning as the boat was entering the Tamar estuary and began a “most beautiful journey of forty miles up this grand river, between high wooded hills.” On the west side were

²⁶ Jinarajadasa was ‘discovered’ by Leadbeater when in Colombo and principal of Ananda College. He tried to secretly stow the boy aboard ship bound for England but his family raised the alarm and only agreed to his departure after CWL agreed to his return. He departed for England where he received an Oxbridge education and became a leading light of the TS. He later became, after Leadbeater’s death, Outer Head (OH) of the (ES) Esoteric Section of the TS, and President of the TS after the death of Arundale in 1945.

orchards and grasslands, on the east, forests of giant blue gums. After about two hours following the river's meanders he arrived at Launceston, "a little city about the same size as Galle and Kandy together." He was met at the old King's wharf by the managing agent of orchard where he was to live, and taken to his hotel. He stayed a week in Launceston, "a clean, well-built town...well supplied with electric tram-ways, lights, telephones, motor cars....a fine park and water services....most beautifully situated on the river surrounded by high hills."

He eventually took the river-boat, that daily plied the many wharves of the estuary, downstream some 27 miles (43km) to the West Bay wharf, (which no longer exists). Here there were about a half dozen orchards along the river and inland for about a mile (1.6km), serviced by "a post office and one shop and a school of seven little boys". There was a telephone and a daily mail service, but no electric power and only one other house in the village, that was known variously as West Bay or Rowella, the name being as vaguely established as the township.²⁷ "Chartley", where Woodward was to stay, was about 1.5km from the West Bay wharf and "reached by a rough path through the forest" (now cleared). It was surrounded by "a few grass fields [and] twenty acres of apple and pear trees".²⁸

He relished the novelty of manual labour in his new home, "working in the garden and orchard with my mamotty [hoe]" and walking each day a few kilometres to collect milk, bread, eggs, butter, and his constant stream of mail. He enjoyed, too, the solitude, and "might be a forest

²⁷ There are considerably more houses today, but the shop and post office have long since disappeared (destroyed by fire). What were orchards are now cleared or planted to vineyards.

²⁸ Woodward "My Voyage to Tasmania" pp11ff.

dweller [a recluse-monk]”²⁹ except for the fine bungalow he inhabited, surrounded by his books which he gradually placed in order for the time when the weather became cooler and outside tasks less pressing, and he could turn once again to his studies.

What Woodward intended when he came to Tasmania is difficult to surmise. His intention to turn to translation seems to have been formed but whether he intended to settle permanently is unknown. A ton of books appears fairly lasting but it was also known through F. Gordon Pearce’s father, who stayed with Woodward at “Chartley”, in 1920, that he intended to visit Ceylon “in about two years”,³⁰ so his sojourn to Tasmania was obviously a planned period of rest and recreation before further travel and possible return to Tasmania permanently. Whatever his intentions however, the question remains, why Tasmania? From the horizon of the late twentieth century, it seems an odd choice for a man, compelled by learning, to deliberately choose the obscurity of such a location to pursue his endeavour.

²⁹ Woodward “My Voyage to Tasmania” pp11 ff.

³⁰ “College Notes” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.IV No.2, April 1920, p25.

The Tamar Valley.

The temptation is to see Woodward's choice of living in Tasmania, as that of a nineteenth century man eschewing surface society for the contemplation of solitary scholarship on the periphery, an explanation in accord with the grandiosity and values of the period. To an extent, the characterisation has some truth. Woodward was earnestly taken with his task of scholarship and desired a suitable location devoid of distraction in order to pursue it. He was an editor and translator whose needs were confined to his manuscripts and philological references in the laborious task of transposing language.

That seems to be how Woodward saw it, though his reliance on his own resources and a slow boat of constant mail left him under-resourced by modern standards of scholarship, which accounts for the more than occasional errors and unsatisfactory renderings¹ of some of his translations. It also illustrates the inflated confidence of the inspired imperial amateur - which is what Woodward was in reality - though the nineteenth century was the era of such inspired amateurism, to which modern scholarship owes much, and owes much blame.

Woodward was obviously careless of such concerns as were many of his contemporaries, though the choice of Tasmania remains a curious one. "Lignus", his eponymously titled tea plantation in Ceylon, was an obvious place of retirement, but being located at Akmeemana, a beautiful

¹ EM Hare to FL Woodward 21 November, 1951[Shield Heritage Woodward File]. Woodward's correspondence held by his solicitors contain a number of letters from IB Horner of the Pali Text Society concerning aspects of translation which also allude to the many cost cutting measures that may account for the difficulties with maintaining standards; even reprints were not corrected, though errors, sometimes glaring ones, were known to the editors. As EM Hare wrote to Woodward, "As to commas, Alice [nickname for IB Horner] says they cost ninepence each- hardly credible- and to insert now in parts printed, more each!"

area in the Galle hinterland, it was still fraught with the heat of the Low Country that had begun to pall with Woodward. It was also located near the “Citrus Group” estate of Henry Amarasuriya, and his death in 1916 was “an unbearable loss to the Buddhist people of Galle”² and a great personal blow to Woodward, closing an aspect of Woodward’s connection with Ceylon.

The choice of Tasmania lies in the colonial experience and the network of connections that brought to Tasmania a steady stream of colonial retirees, primarily from India and Ceylon. The immediate explanation for Woodward’s choice lies in his friendship with Carl Christian Halling who owned “Chartley”. Halling was originally with the Ceylon Trading Company in Colombo, and was a member of the TS, though probably not of significance in the organisation as he fails a mention in the Theosophical Year Books, a kind of TS “Who’s Who”, issued in the late 1930s and 40s. Halling supported Mahinda College, and in 1913 presented the school with a Union Jack³ and later in 1915, sponsored an English Literature prize for an essay demonstrating particular knowledge of Ruskin, as well as a twenty five shilling (25/-) English Essay prize on the subject, “Why Animal Food Should be Avoided,” a mix of ‘progressive’ interests, Theosophy, vegetarianism, and Ruskin radicalism garnished with Imperial pride.⁴

By 1915 Halling had moved to the Pacific Trading Co. in Singapore, and had purchased “Chartley” in Tasmania, a property of about 113 acres, at

²Roberts, N. *Galle- as quiet as asleep* p 314.

³ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.1 No. 4 April 1913 p17.

⁴ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. II No.4 August 1915, p29.

Rowella.⁵ Woodward thought the property was about 170 acres⁶ and Gunewardene⁷ repeats the misconception. The original property, however, was 63 acres and Halling bought an additional 50 acres in 1925. He obviously had reasonable means as “Chartley” cost £2500 for the original 63 acres (which was larger than the usual Tamar orcharding block), though only twenty acres were planted to pome fruit,⁸ the rest remaining uncleared. The offer to Woodward may not have been quite as altruistic as it appears; having Woodward ‘on the spot’ to monitor the management of his investment, would have given Halling assurance and intelligence of problems or progress.

Halling seems a fairly typical tale of the colonial absentee investor on the Tamar. “Chartley” was subdivided from the Point Rapid estate in 1907, early in the Tamar orcharding boom, by the Gunn family, (then merchants in Launceston and related to the Gunns who established orcharding at “Strathlyn” closer to Launceston) and sold for £362. It was sold to Halling in 1915 for £2500, a substantial mark up, even for boom conditions, indicating buyer exploitation. The purchase was effected on his behalf by Weedon & Co., a firm of agents who managed many orcharding estates owned by absentee investors. Woodward indicates in a letter in November 1919⁹ that Halling was in New York, which was why he was living alone at “Chartley”, though Halling seems never to have really settled in Rowella. Local people do not recall him and, in

⁵Source: Mortgage and other deeds in possession of Dr Robin Smith, present owner of Chartley.

⁶ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. IV No.2 April 1920 p 11ff.

⁷Gunewardene. *FL Woodward* p 59.

⁸Orchards in the North averaged about 20 acres whereas those in the South, which were established earlier, were about 14 acres, nevertheless, 90% of Tasmanian pome orchards were less than 21 acres. See Goodhand, *WE Pome Fruit Orchard in Tasmania- Its Evolution and Present Geographic Basis* (unpublished MA Thesis, University of Tasmania, May 1961) p125

⁹ Cited in Gunewardene p59.

1925, he gives his address as Hornsby,¹⁰ then outer Sydney. He sold “Chartley” in 1931, during the Depression, for just £600, an appalling loss (since it also had a mortgage of £3000) and so Halling forms one of the many stories of hope and loss by absentee colonial investors that occurred at that time.¹¹

Tasmania had been the destination of colonial retirees from the earliest settlement of the colony and there were a number of early accounts and observations of Tasmania,¹² that circulated throughout the Empire and which encouraged settlement. The advantages of Tasmania were considerable and, far from being the ‘end of the earth’ it presents geographically, it was an important port of call on the sea route from Europe. This was particularly true during the time of sail up to the 1880s, where the pattern of trade winds made Tasmania a natural destination. Tasmania was an attractive destination for those on leave from imperial service, particularly from India and Ceylon, and stories are told of local farmers ‘parking’ horses upon the ‘long acres’ to tempt passing purchasers of mounts. News and information from, and about, India and Ceylon, although obviously Eurocentric, was a significant staple of reported news in Australia, and the reverse was also true. The relative

¹⁰ Source: Mortgage and other deeds to “Chartley” courtesy of Dr Robin Smith. Hornsby was then an outer suburb of bush and sandstone, picturesque but more country than city.

¹¹ Source: Mortgage and other deeds to “Chartley”

¹² Henderson, J. *Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land* (Calcutta: 1832); Curr, E *An Account of the Colony of Van Diemen's Land, principally designed for the use of emigrants* (London: 1824) [Facsimile Edition: Hobart, Platypus Publications, 1967]. Evans, G. *A Geographical, Historical, and Topographical Description of van Diemen's Land, with important hints to emigrants etc.* (London: 1822) [Facsimile Edition: Adelaide, Griffin Press, 1967.]; Betts, T *An Account of the Colony of Van Diemen's Land* (Calcutta: 1830); Princep, A. *The Journal of a Voyage to Van Diemen's Land* (London: 1833); Anon. *A Visit to Tasmania by an Anglo-Indian 1875* (Murree, Printed at N.W.F Press, 1877) [Ferguson item no.6017, Mitchell Library, Sydney]; Braddon, E “Letters to India from North-West Tasmania”, published in *The Statesman and Friend of India*, 1878 [THRA-P&P Vol. 27 #4, 1980 pp119-218]

silence in the present Australian news services of events on the Indian sub continent, is in distinct contrast with their familiarity to colonial readers.

Tasmania had a number of pleasing aspects that encouraged settlement by the Anglo-Indian civil and military services. It was Anglo-celtic in race and culture, and “all very English”,¹³ being relatively unencumbered by the ‘inconvenient’ presence of indigenes. Braddon in his *Letters....* makes the colonial racist assumptions clear in his preference of Tasmania over New Zealand which, he pointed out, “has the Maori, who is a nuisance neither useful or [sic] picturesque.”¹⁴ As part of its litany of English attributes, Tasmania also had “*The most salubrious climate in the world*”,¹⁵ similar, though more mild, than England and not as extreme as Canada - “the air of Tasmania was to that of England as cream to skimmed milk.”¹⁶ Lastly and most importantly, land and the cost of living were relatively cheap, in fact, under the various Tasmanian immigration schemes throughout the nineteenth century, land was made available for selection or at nominal cost.

Edward Braddon, Premier of Tasmania 1894-1899, and one of the best known Anglo-Indians to settle in Tasmania, sums up the Tasmanian case in his *Letters...* which undoubtedly contributed to the migration of

¹³Braddon, E “Letters to India from North-West Tasmania”, published in *The Statesman and Friend of India*, 1878. For discussion and reproduction of Braddon’s *Letters...* see Bennett, S “A Home in the Colonies- Edward Braddon’s Letters to India from North-West Tasmania” *Tasmanian Historical Research Association-Papers & Proceedings* Vol. 27 #4, 1980 p127. Braddon’s description refers specifically to Launceston which “might well be taken for some country town at home, that had not quite lost its primitive character.”

¹⁴Braddon THRA p123.

¹⁵Stilwell, G. “The Castra Scheme” in Winter, G [ed] *Tasmanian Insights- essays in honour of Geoffrey Thomas Stilwell* (Hobart: State Library of Tasmania, 1992) p19. From a letter from Col MM Shaw to W Boyer 7 July 1869 regarding Anglo Indian settlement at Castra. (Royal Society Archives, University of Tasmania). While Australians are fond of characterising the Tasmanian climate as sub-arctic, it is well to note the changes in climatic ‘habit’. At one time, in the early part of the 20th century, it was fashionable to retreat to Tasmania to avoid the ‘excessive’ heat of Melbourne summers.

numerous “other retired officers from the Indian Services”, like the Eastons,¹⁷ who also settled on Tasmania’s North West coast.

The expenses of living in England, and the increasing difficulty of finding an opening for one’s children there, has been turning the eyes of “old Indians” to the Colonies, for many years.....¹⁸

In a sense, Tasmania was the ‘poor man’s England’, and remained so to the conclusion of Empire in India and Ceylon. For the colonial retiree it had much to offer; pensions of 300 to 400 pounds per year could be made to go further “without descending in the social scale”,¹⁹ and even made to be the basis of compounding wealth through judicious investment. Further, the England of their hoped retirement was not only expensive, it was “the England of their boyhood”,²⁰ and had ceased to be recognisable. As Col. Crawford, instigator of the Castra scheme, observed, most retirees preferred a land where “cotton and sugar *do not grow*; where white ants *do not swarm*.”²¹ Canada was eliminated on the grounds of climate and, in his view, proximity to the USA which made annexation, peaceful or otherwise, a possibility, and which, of course, would mean it would cease to be ‘British’, a most important consideration. That left New Zealand or Tasmania, choosing the latter as ‘more civilised’, for the racial reasons alluded to by Braddon.

¹⁶Braddon THRA p127.

¹⁷see Mercer “From Raj to Rustic” THRA Vol. 25 #3 1978 pp71ff. George Easton Sn was one time Under-Secretary-of-State for the Province of Bengal. His improvident investment in a failed bank undoubtedly contributed to the decision to emigrate to Tasmania.

¹⁸Braddon THRA p121. Braddon, according to Bennett, was probably influenced, like many others, by Crawford’s proselytising efforts at Castra. Braddon was elected to parliament several months after the publication of the last of his *Letters*... and rose to be Tasmanian Agent General in England, Premier, a delegate to the Australian Constitutional Convention, and later a member of the Commonwealth parliament. He was knighted in 1891 and made Privy Councillor in 1897. He died at Leith in 1904 aged seventy four.

¹⁹Stilwell p14 quoting Col Crawford.

²⁰Stilwell p19.

²¹Stilwell p14.

It is easy to forget, in a post colonial world, that the British of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century imperial period saw the world naturally as theirs. No child of middle class Anglo-celtic extraction in Britain or the 'colonies' grew up without an atlas and an extreme consciousness that 'the pink bits' were British. And there were a lot of 'pink bits'. At the height of empire Britain controlled over 25% of the earth's land mass and a similar percentage of the world's population, an extraordinary presence. In a period of colonisation and settlement, it was easy to see the world as the oyster of the British, with wide choices as to where, and how, to live - race, climate and means being the principal determiners. The ubiquitous sobriquet "Home", used by the British and colonials alike up until the 1950s to describe Britain, indicates not only a nostalgic umbilical connection but a sense that 'Britain' had an extended geography.²²

Settling in retirement in one of the British outposts seemed, then, a normal consideration, though many factors influenced the enthusiasm with which this was embraced. One such factor, influencing the extent and pattern of migration, emerged after the Indian Mutiny of 1857. The cessation of the Honourable East India Company meant an end to the patronage of 'friends' at the Court of Directors and the beginning of a system of selection on 'merit', by competitive examination, that was to pervade and become a feature of the British civil and military service.²³

²²A poignant aspect of this yearning for home is evidenced in the tombstones on the Isle of the Dead at the convict settlement of Port Arthur; "each headstone faces north, towards the Mother Country.." Montgomery, B. "Technology revives dead heritage." *The Australian* 27-28 April, 1996, p8.

²³It is easy to forget how historically late this shift from nepotism to supposed selection on merit really was. It is most starkly realised by noting that many senior commanders of British forces in the First World War entered the military when it was still influenced by those whose commissions were purchased (till 1871) - which might explain some of the more dubious aspects of tactics. The civil service did not use competitive selection till after 1870.

This is not to say the British system of 'selection on merit', much touted as a significant virtue of later imperial administration, was particularly comprehensive. Education, being the instrument of *entrée*, meant selection was narrowly confined to products of the Public School system, an institution much defined by the middle class values and ideals of Arnold and the model of Rugby.²⁴ The system produced a remarkably focused and uniform product, that blended the contradictions of conformity and eccentric individuality, dedicated and disciplined to the ideals of service, duty and self (and other) improvement - which probably explains its general effectiveness, a fact only now grudgingly acknowledged as we recede from the colonial experience.

Among those old officers left behind by the new meritocracy in India, however, was "much discontent and disappointment",²⁵ and this provided fertile ground for recruitment from India and Ceylon. Evidence of the Anglo-Indian (and Anglo-Ceylonese) presence in Tasmania continually recurs in place and property names - a suburb of Hobart called 'Howrah', a property near Falmouth called 'Simla', a mountain road called "Elephant Pass" - and while many schemes for Anglo-Indian migration were proposed, few flourished, despite migration being an early and continuing obsession of successive Tasmanian governments.

Probably the best known was the Castra scheme proposed by Col. Andrew Crawford in his *Letter to the Officers of H.M Indian Services*,

²⁴Bamford *Rise of the Public School*

Honey JR de S Tom Browns *Universe - the development of the public school in the nineteenth century* (London: 1977)

²⁵Stilwell p13.

Civil and Military.²⁶ *Castra* (Latin for ‘camp’ or defended encampment) was an uncleared area of 32000 acres near but not connected by road to Ulverstone (north-west Tasmania). With government approval and the promise of a road, Crawford promoted his scheme among Anglo-Indians with enthusiasm. The subsequent story of frustration and disappointment, is a familiar one,²⁷ but it did lead to the eventual settlement of a number of Anglo-Indian families - “Of the forty one original purchasers at *Castra*, twenty were living in Tasmania in 1880”,²⁸ and a number were to come later.

There were numerous other attempts to encourage settlement. The Immigration League of Tasmania,²⁹ one of a number of private promoters of settlement, retained an Agent in India who actively recruited on the subcontinent on behalf of the League, advertising regularly in journals like the *Indian Planters Gazette* (Calcutta). His annual report to the Hobart Branch, in 1908, on enquires to immigrate indicates the kind of interest kindled by these efforts: eight Government officers of “superior services”; twenty three from subordinates; fifty five from time expired soldiers; and sixteen civilians. Though it hardly constitutes a wave of

²⁶Stilwell p13. Crawford’s original house remains a tumbled down decaying ruin in the middle of a paddock with wonderful surrounding views. Locals however see little historical value in the house and have little urge for preservation.

²⁷Crawford’s scheme set a price of land over and above government purchase that allowed for clearing, fencing and the development of infrastructure. It assumed a commonality of purpose that is somewhat utopian and the inevitable disappointment and frustration of participants, soured the proposal. This was not aided by the failure of the government to construct the promised access road which profoundly hampered advancement of the scheme. Visiting the area today makes the extreme difficulties obvious - while the soils are excellent, access is through very steep and treacherous terrain that would have been a road builder’s nightmare at the time.

²⁸Stilwell p23.

²⁹It was a branch of the Immigration League of Australia but was, curiously, amalgamated with the Tourist Bureau in 1907 AOT (CSD 22/129/88) 7EdwardVII No.2.

migration, it indicates the profile of interest and the direction of recruitment.³⁰

Retirees were targeted not only for settlement but also for investment 'opportunities' that had the potential to lead to retirement on income bearing properties. After all, most colonial retirees were not aged but relatively active people in their middle to late middle age seeking a 'constructive' retirement. This was not a outlook confined to the colonies but also infected local professional business people. It became fashionable around Hobart to invest in a young orchard for retirement, that is, one bought on establishment, and by the time one retired, in five or so years, one could literally enjoy the fruits of one's investment. The effect was such that land prices in the south of Tasmania rose steeply after 1900 with a full bearing orchard worth £100-250 per acre, at that time, compared with £90-150 in 1960.³¹

In northern Tasmania, at the turn of the century, this interest also centred on pome fruit orcharding, an 'ideal' investment opportunity for the more modest retiree, since it required no vast initial investment and could be managed in conjunction with other properties. As an advertisement [see Illustrations], in 1914, for the orcharding agents Sadleir & Knight states, orcharding offered "very satisfactory profits for a small capital outlay, while the life is an exceptionally attractive one."³²

The establishment of orcharding on the Tamar began in the 1890s and was slow at first. Even in 1901 there were, with a few exceptions, "no

³⁰Launceston *Examiner* 2 September 1908.

³¹Goodhand p51.

³²"Launceston and the Tamar Valley" *The Fruit World of Australasia* 30 June 1914. p10

orchards worthy of the name”³³, being hampered by the ubiquitous codlin moth, which first appeared in Launceston in 1855,³⁴ but more particularly by root blight (armalaria) which was harboured in newly cleared soils and their previous eucalypt inhabitants. The use of blight resistant Northern Spy root stock allowed the grafting of desired varieties and pome fruit orcharding boomed in the period 1904-1919 with vast tracts being cleared, particularly on the west Tamar, on behalf of Anglo-Indian³⁵ and South African investors, as well as those from Ceylon, Britain, the Malay States, Siam and mainland Australia.

They were... men of varied professional and business origins, ranging from India Army Officers to English business men.....university professors, civil servants, clergymen and school teachers.³⁶

These were urban business people, in the main, part of a speculative boom that was to be the principle characteristic and essential backbone of pome orcharding in northern Tasmania. The companies and syndicates - mainly Launceston real estate firms - that bought up and subdivided large properties in the Mersey and Tamar areas sent agents overseas, particularly to India, to solicit investment, and the government participated with printed literature sent there as well. It was an aggressive program that had counterparts in other parts of the world, similar projects attempting to attract interest from a similar coterie of colonial investors and retirees. Pome orcharding schemes with absentee

³³*The Agricultural Gazette of Tasmania* December 1901 p133.

³⁴Osbourne J “Fruit Culture in Tasmania” *The Agricultural Gazette of Tasmania* February 1911 p66. It spread to the rest of the state by 1875 and Tasmania has the dubious distinction of having introduced it to New Zealand. Its spread was aided by the many neglected ‘backyard’ orchards that were the backbone of orcharding at that time in the North.

³⁵The term Anglo-Indian is used in two senses: to describe the English who lived or were born in India; and also to describe those of mixed English and Indian ancestry. In this paper the meaning is restricted to the former usage.

management were promoted in Nelson, New Zealand (1911-1916), and in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, and the U.S. Pacific states (1905-1915)³⁷

During the first World War, contrary to the optimism of Sadleir & Knight's advertisement, [see Illustrations] many of these areas became "neglected and finally abandoned"³⁸ because of the shortage of labour and the cessation of overseas shipments. Despite these factors, by 1919, the Tamar had the state's largest plantings of pears (because of climatic advantage) and was second only to the Huon in apples.³⁹ The importance of orcharding, and the overseas speculation that fuelled it in the north, cannot be underestimated. In 1907, the PMG (Post Master General's Department) - then a central and important government enterprise - signed contracts with the Orient line for the transport of mail to the UK and Europe. The conditions were that Orient provide 6 fast mail steamers (with cool store facilities) to service Hobart, from February to May each year, from 1910 on, and transport the fruit crop to the Continent. The fact that a national contract had such a specific regional clause, indicates the size and national economic importance of the Tasmanian pome fruit industry.⁴⁰

³⁶Goodhand p55.

³⁷Goodhand p49-51.

³⁸Wivell, TD. "History of the Fruit Industry on The West Tamar" in *You and Your Council*, a pamphlet published in the 1960s for the Beaconsfield Council as a promotional feature p17.

³⁹Goodhand p52.

⁴⁰This is why fruit was collected from the many jetties servicing the Tamar orchards and taken upstream to King's Wharf Launceston for transshipment by rail (which at that time ran right to the wharf) to Hobart. In 1922 direct shipments to England began from Inspection Head (Beauty Point) and by 1926 eight ships called annually. The construction by Henry Jones & Co. of the Beauty Point cool store in 1932 made direct overseas shipments from the north an established feature of the industry. [See Partridge *History of the Apple and Pear Industry in the Tamar Valley*]

The “Absentee System”, whereby investors entrusted the management of their holdings, was then, as it is today, principally a profitable opportunity for scheme promoters and managing agents, rather than investors. The involvement of real estate firms in both the subdivision and subsequent clearing, development, and absentee management was “really the basis of a scandal”, the “biggest scandal ever suffered by the fruit industry in Tasmania”.⁴¹ In 1916, one company managed nine estates on the West Tamar for absentee owners, covering 2000 acres, “while in all some £500,000 was invested”⁴² in the Tamar and on the Mersey by foreign investors. The boom created by promoters and propagandists like the Victorian horticulturalist Nobelius, whose property of “Freshwater”, at Legana, was one of the first and largest concerns of the time, saw inevitable disasters like the subdivision at Kelso which was simply unsuited to orcharding, being poorly drained, with an underlying hard pan, and with soils that “would hardly support a dandelion.”⁴³ Of the 35 blocks at Kelso, 25 were sold to Anglo-Indians who “invested their life savings”. None achieved commercial production, despite government supervision and assistance.

Many came and saw their purchases and left immediately without even taking possession. Others tried to make their holdings pay, but lacking experience, failed.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, many Anglo-Indians did retire to orcharding in the Tamar including a McNaught, who was given “credit for a lot of the settlement rapidly taking place on the Tamar”, and who “influenced the first

⁴¹Partridge, *A Major Study- A History of the Apple and Pear Industry in the Tamar Valley* (State Library-Northern Local History Collection; no publisher, no pagination, Nov. 1976)

⁴²Goodhand p53.

⁴³McIntyre, L *Rowella-Kayena (West Bay-Richmond Hill) from 1805*. (Launceston: Rowella Book Committee, 1978.) p63.

⁴⁴Goodhand p57.

serious attempts to make the Tamar district more widely known amongst the retired civil servants of India.”⁴⁵ McNaught settled in the Rowella area and commissioned Alexander North⁴⁶ to build him a house overlooking Ruffin’s Bay, an arm of the Tamar and peaceful crook of water that reverts to wide flats at low tide. The house was made of concrete, North’s favourite material, with a detached kitchen at the rear, a common feature at the time when the risk of a kitchen fire engulfing the entire house was averted by this architectural device - a practical approach, though not particularly helpful to the cook (usually women, of course).

McNaught called the house “Bhatkawa”⁴⁷, which has been variously translated as “I am satisfied” or “I’m replete” in the sense of having sufficient to eat - a kind of “Dunroamin” in Indian dialect. McNaught, it would seem, became discouraged with farming and departed towards the end of the First World War, and the house was rented until its purchase by Woodward, in partnership with his friend Henri Frei, in 1926.

McNaught was certainly not the sole Anglo-Indian in the immediate Rowella area. There was also the unusually named Bearpark who lived along the road leading to Waterton Hall and ran a successful orchard. He was unusual in that he was probably a Eurasian Anglo-Indian and he had

⁴⁵*The Fruit World* p36. What these efforts entailed is not recorded.

⁴⁶Hodgkinson, D. “The Men behind our buildings.” *The Examiner* - Northern Scene 15 December 1982, p38. Alexander North (1859-1945) was responsible for a number of significant buildings in Launceston: Holy Trinity, St Aiden’s, St Oswald’s, the modern parts of St John’s, including its remarkable dome and the modern extensions of the Church of the Apostles. He also designed the remarkable Italianate AMP building next to the old Post Office and the Chapel of Trinity College, Melbourne University with its fascinating interior. He redesigned Waterton Hall for his friend CB Brady as well as designing McNaught’s home, “Bhatkawa”, just across the field from Waterton.

⁴⁷McIntyre, L. *Rowella-Kayena* p 30-31. McIntyre is the daughter of CB Brady of Waterton Hall. ‘Bhatkawa’ has been extensively renovated in recent times - the ‘lean-to’ kitchen has been removed and replaced by an attached ‘country kitchen’, and an additional wing has been added to the

a daughter whose education he funded in India.⁴⁸ The nearby property on the Westwood subdivision was also owned by a colonial officer, Sir John Fraser (1864-1941), who entered the Ceylon Civil Service in 1887 and rose to the important office of Government Agent (1914-1923) in the Western Province (which included Colombo), and also became a Member of the Legislative Council.⁴⁹ In the enclosed world of colonial society, Fraser and Woodward undoubtedly knew of one another.

The orcharding boom on the Tamar, in the period up to 1919, was highly speculative and part of an extensive and well publicised international marketing exercise aimed at attracting investment from professionals and retirees. It undoubtedly attracted Halling, McNaught, Fraser and numerous others, and brought Woodward in its wake. His friendship with Halling and the offer of accommodation, in exchange for keeping an eye on Halling's investment, must have been an attractive opportunity for a man of his modest means, for even Woodward's purchase of a permanent home at "Bhatkawa", required the financial assistance of his friend, Frei.

Woodward was influenced and affected by the same currents of opinion and information that circulated in the colonies regarding the potentiality of Tasmania and the Tamar for the retiree and, as a result, his decision to settle on the Tamar is less remarkable than it may at first appear. Far from settling beyond the reach of his colonial past, Woodward followed

southern end to complement the original structure. A small Buddhist shrine in the hall reminds visitors of the presence of Woodward.

⁴⁸Information from Freda Williams, who with her husband, Laurie, ran the Rowella store. It has previously been owned and operated by Mrs Williams' adoptive parents, the Harris's. Mrs Williams met Mr Bearpark's Eurasian daughter when she came to Rowella and describes her with some affection.

⁴⁹*Who's Who* 1941. Fraser also build the elegant "Villa Florenza" in Denison Rd Launceston.

an established pattern of retirement that illustrates an important aspect of, and contribution to, Tasmanian demography and pattern of migration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

His life on the Tamar also corresponded to the rise and decline of the orcharding industry along the river and the hive of boating activity that serviced it. The river was an essential aspect of orcharding's location, being one of the only efficient, cheap means of bulk carriage, other than rail, before the advent of road transport - "the coastal or estuarine site was therefore a near necessity".⁵⁰ Apple and pear orchards characterised the life and industry of the Tamar through to the 1960s. The industry's demise coincided with the end of empire and the move by Britain into the European Community and away from its colonial heritage. The end of the British market⁵¹ proved the end of orcharding and ended, too, a colourful period of river activity; of boat captains with unique skills in handling the huge tidal⁵² currents, and who plied the numerous wharves that dotted the river, their vessels mounting the tides that heaved-to against the banks.

Rowella- Copied Class and English Ease.

The world Frank Lee Woodward, and other Anglo-Indian or Anglo-Ceylonese, entered when he came to live in Rowella was an unusual example of rural class division, quite unlike country communities

⁵⁰Goodhand p213.

⁵¹While British entry to the European Community was a central factor in the demise of Tasmanian orcharding it was not the sole reason. In 1960 the UK absorbed 50% of Tasmania's apples and 80% of its pears, but increased local UK plantings and improved storage, extending the market season, as well as inappropriate varieties and increased competition from other southern hemisphere suppliers like South Africa, New Zealand, Chile and Argentina also hastened its demise. See Goodhand p172.

⁵²Source: Port of Launceston Authority. Below the Batman Bridge (where Rowella is located), the average fluctuation is 2.3m and occasionally exceeding 3m. Above the Batman Bridge, closer to Launceston, the fluctuation is greater, averaging 2.8m and occasionally exceeding 4m. Because of the length of the river there is 1hr35min tidal delay between Low Head and Launceston.

elsewhere in Tasmania. There was the usual division between those of property and those who laboured for their living but the nature and permutations of these arrangements made it distinctive. It was unlike the Midlands squirearchies⁵³ with their 'established' and substantial wool growing estates that sprawled across the central grasslands⁵⁴ of Tasmania, emulating rural England; and it was also unlike the world of the "cocky"⁵⁵ selectors of Tasmania's north east and north west with their characteristic small, family based, mixed farming 'selections'.

The Tamar region assumed a quite different class appearance for, while it had originally been characterised by large estates based on earlier land grants, it had been substantially subdivided during the orcharding boom, between 1904 and 1919. The population that principally followed in its wake was not the 'old moneyed' Midlands squirearchy but middle class, often urban based, professionals for whom agriculture was a lifestyle, as well as an income generating choice, and where professional managers carried the burden of planning and decision making, quite different to the small owner managed enterprises that "had painstakingly planted orchards in the south."⁵⁶ They came from all parts of the British Empire, the Mainland, and elsewhere in Tasmania, and from every imaginable

⁵³The Midlands estates which dominated colonial Tasmanian politics, clustered their workers about them in an almost feudal relationship. Many retired into cottages on the estates after a life time of service having probably married another of the servants on the estate. The structure was still recognisable well into the latter 20th century, long after it had died out in England.

⁵⁴These open savanna type grasslands were the fields of traditional Aboriginal hunting that were kept 'open' by annual Aboriginal fires. It was ideal grazing country and was quickly assumed in land grants to the early settlers. Unfortunately it not only displaced traditional hunting but severed the path of seasonal migration back and forth to the east coast, destroying traditional land use and patterns of living.

⁵⁵The term "cocky" has a variety of explanations, from origins in lower class cant to explanations based on arrogant demeanour. Whatever the origin, its application was to the struggling 'selector' on barely sustainable farms, that is, to people who had 'selected' virgin land made available by the government for purchase by pioneering settlers.

⁵⁶Goodhand p49-51.

business and profession. The Richmond Hill and West Bay (Rowella) area in particular was quite distinctive.

Here retired people, Anglo-Indians, Englishmen and native born Tasmanians are all to be found within a short radius, and the circle at one time included a manager, an accountant, an architect, a doctor, an ex-naval commander who fought at Jutland, and the 'squire'.⁵⁷

These were not people necessarily of rural origin and that constitutes a substantial cultural and experiential difference. These were the 'lifestyle' of their time, seeking rural solace with an income and, in some ways, presenting a disquieting resemblance to the middle class urban escapees of the late twentieth century. As a result of this influx at that time, the Tamar community assumed a pronounced middle class outlook, not normally found in traditional rural communities, and this was exhibited, for example, in the unusual educational accomplishments of the area. A small school was established, in 1917, in a grain shed opposite the Rowella store, until a school house was hauled by bullock team from Beaconsfield, in 1922. In the period before its closure in 1965, the Rowella-Richmond Hill school produced, per capita, more junior scholarships and state bursary winners than any other school in the state, as well as a Rhodes Scholar.⁵⁸

This middle class bias can be seen in settlers like Brady (a businessman), Dr Shone (a doctor), Heyward (an engineer), and North (an architect), who were 'professionals' with roots in Melbourne and elsewhere, and it

⁵⁷Horner, AG. *Tasmanian Journey* (Hobart: Cat & Fiddle Press, 1974) p79. This is a most unusual book of travelling remembrances originally written in 1936 and published after Horner's death. While in this description, no names are mentioned, the 'squire' is Brady, who was often termed such, (affectionately or facetiously, depending on the person), the 'architect' was North, the 'doctor', Dr Shone (also an orchardist) and the 'ex-naval commander' was Commander Foot.

can be seen similarly among the Anglo-Indian civil servants and military retirees who often invested site unseen. In common with these was another middle class, and affluent, group who resided in Launceston and who had weekend and holiday homes along the river. They may not have been active in the community but they influenced the 'tone', particularly when they chose to retire permanently on the river, joining other outside and colonial retirees, who, like Woodward, took little part in the business of orcharding but simply chose to live on their pensions and absorb the simple pleasure of river life. This added an urbane element to the district, an injection of people whose experience was fundamentally formed elsewhere and in other endeavours, brought together by the river, both in its aesthetic and practical guise.

The Tamar was an organising focus of life, an essential instrument of bulk conveyance, and an aesthetically unique estuary, that drew people to live along its banks. It is a long meandering river, some 65 km from the confluence of the North and South Esk rivers at Launceston to the sea. At low tide it subsides into extensive mudflats and at high tide brims the edge of its banks. Where Frank Woodward eventually chose to live, at "Bhatkawa" overlooking Ruffins Bay, the river is caught by the jutting jaw of Longreach like a hushed lake and only when the river tide turns and powers itself to the sea, does it become obvious that it is a river; the rapid slump of tide appears as though some Archimedes has arisen from his bath to announce the eureka of the day.

The remarkable beauty of the river may have attracted the middle class retirees and investors, but there were others that shared the practical

⁵⁸McIntyre, L. *Rowella-Kayena* p 94. The Rhodes Scholar was Oliver Heyward, later Anglican Bishop of Bendigo, now retired.

presence of the river, active professional farmers and orchardists, like Claude Clark, Woodward's next door neighbour at "Bhatkawa", originally from the orcharding districts of the south. They were joined by another layer of propertied involvement, which emerged after the First World War, when Soldier Settlers were assisted into ownership of small (often uneconomic) orchards. Here the brunt of the labour was carried personally, or by family members, and the lives of these farmers resembled those of the north east and north west "cockies", from where some had originated.⁵⁹ Beyond the owner-orchardists were those without property, a class of permanent orchard labourers and managers, assisted by a large force of itinerant workers which, at harvest,⁶⁰ transformed the district into a hive of activity.

Thus, far from descending into a rural wilderness of Appalachian ignorance, Woodward, in fact, moved into relatively familiar surroundings, elements of which, echoed his own rural origins. Here his learning and background were respected, even craved, by those of the middle class starved for intellectual stimulation. Despite his odd calling, which would have begged misunderstanding- and sometimes did- Woodward entered a quite conducive milieu.

⁵⁹Loone, AW. *Tasmania's North-East- a comprehensive history of North-Eastern Tasmania and its people* (Launceston: Regal Press, reprinted 1981, originally published 1928) p151. Loone mentions a number like CH Hookway from one of the pioneering 'cocky' families of Scottsdale who settled into orcharding on the Tamar.

⁶⁰Fifty percent of the labour force were seasonal itinerants and students- and 50% of those came from outside Tasmania, often of immigrant origin, who followed the mainland fruit and other seasonal harvests. [See Goodhand p138-139] Itinerant labour was a significant feature of Tasmanian society in the early to middle 20th century and whole families followed the fruit picking, the hop harvest and the small fruit. It presented a vexing and persistent problem for educating the young whose economic value exceeded that of any future 'investment' from education. Another, less disruptive yet significant itinerant labour force was centred in the Longford area, near Launceston, where the men would leave their families each year, with their push bikes, to follow the mainland shearing as far away as Queensland. It was from this group that many of the 'cocky' selectors made the transition into property.

There were aspects that, in some respects, emulated facets of British society, almost to the point of parody. Australians at that time, though not necessarily consciously, resided within an uneasy ambivalence, perceiving themselves both as Australian and as exiled from 'Home', rather than simply held within their own hearth. Despite the fact that, by 1901, eighty two percent⁶¹ of Australians were native born (eighty six percent by 1939), most (ninety seven percent in 1939⁶²) claimed British origin.

They were Australian Britons, whose country was Australia and the British Empire. This double loyalty is, indeed, an unusual phenomenon; and it is so because empires are not usually as enlightened as the British Empire.⁶³

The dual loyalty,⁶⁴ inspired, as Hirst suggests, by the doubtful 'enlightenment' of the British Empire, was not altogether comfortable. Far from a simple product of benign imperial beneficence, contained within it was an unresolved conflict of identity, a contradictory sense of nascent national pride and colonial inferiority, which has taken till the end of the twentieth century to reconcile in Australia. It was not unlike the ambivalence that seized the early Sinhala elite of Ceylon, and which

⁶¹Clark, M. *A Short History of Australia* (New York: Mentor, 1969) p164

⁶²Bolton, G. *The Oxford History of Australia- Vol. 5 The Middle Way 1942-1988* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993) p3.

⁶³Hirst, J. "Who Tugged the Forelock" *The Australian* 9 December 1995, p25. Hirst's thesis is that despite late 20th century 'republican' revisionism, Australians in the first half of the 20th century, with some notable exceptions, held to their Australian identity, as well as their sense of belonging the wider entity of Empire, without a sense of contradiction. Whether this was attributable to the 'enlightened' aspects of the British Empire, or not, is more than arguable, though British cultural, linguistic and ethnic homogeneity was obviously the principal reason for such a strong dual identity.

⁶⁴An example of this ambivalence is revealed in the *Examiner* 30 October, 1919, p4. It dealt with the parliamentary controversy over the proposed Ephinora cooperative scheme to settle 35 English ex-servicemen on land at Whitefoord Hills in Tasmania. The member for Wilmot, Mr Blyth, revealed an underlying anti-British resentment and argued that native born ex-servicemen were being "robbed of their birthright"(p4). The Minister for Lands, Mr Hean, in his reply "produced the instructions of Parliament that men who had fought for the Empire should be treated alike". The *Examiner* editorialised that locals had continually advocated increased immigration, yet when it was manifested in a concrete proposal, it was opposed.

persists to a diminishing degree to this day. It combines a grudging respect for the British legacy with a seething anger at imposed colonial inferiority, together with an uncertainty regarding national culture. This manifests either as exaggerated and defiant pride, or self conscious apology; a people, that is, who still remain a little uncomfortable in their cultural skin.

The British character of Australia, which similarly left a difficulty in defining identity without the strident use of a megaphone, was then undoubted and largely unquestioned. The landscape though, contradicted the claim and nagged the early English settlers, who experienced “a great tension....between the sense of finally coming home and reaching a place of the deepest exile”.⁶⁵ Exiled from familiarity, they craved names of English order, names to tame the coarse and unaccustomed landscape of straggling eucalypts and black wattle, names that imposed the first contradictions of identity and place.

There were names of rivers and towns like Tamar⁶⁶ and Esk, Launceston and Devonport; and, in a perverse concession to Southern Hemisphere

⁶⁵Boyce, J “Journeying Home- a new look at the British invasion of Van Diemen’s Land: 1803-1823” *Island*, (Sandy Bay, Tasmania) #66, Autumn 1996, p42. [Article based on an unpublished history honours thesis University of Tasmania, 1994] The characterisation of early English settlement as one suffering a profound isolation [See Morgan, S. *Land Settlement in Early Tasmania: Creating an Antipodean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)] is persuasively questioned by Boyce. He argues early Vandemonien settlers to 1820 rapidly established a symbiotic survivalist culture mediated by white association with indigenous women. It was, in his view, the later land grant settlers who introduced the sense of exile and isolation. The argument is echoed and emphasised in work by Hyam *Empire and Sexuality* who argues early imperial relations with indigenous cultures were generally symbiotic and sympathetic, if undeniably invasive. It was the development and dominance of repressive Victorian morality after c.1830 (and the increasing presence of European women) that destroyed the early sympathetic relations, establishing a rift with indigenous culture, and a commensurate increase in the sense of profound isolation and exile from metropolitan culture - perceived now as the only ‘valid’ culture. Thus the shift from sympathetic symbiosis to a sense of alienation and exile, was part of a more general imperial experience.

⁶⁶The Tamar was named by Col Paterson commander of the settlement at Port Dalrymple (at the mouth of the Tamar) in honour of Governor King who was born in Launceston [England] on the Tamar.

inversion, the counties of Tasmania and their towns were named in the reverse order to England, so those in the north appeared in the south, and southern counties, in the north. Occasionally, though, the 'system' made peculiar deviations and located Devonport, for instance, on the Mersey, in a parody of place, and of memory of a home in the mind alone.

Exiled and immigrant communities⁶⁷ adhere to the familiarity of names, customs, and language, and impose them on their surroundings without recognising the absurdity of contrast and comparison. They become, in some respects, frozen in time, clinging to, and even embellishing, customs and habits that have altered, or even disappeared, in the metropolitan centre of origin. This is encountered in the configuration of community in colonial Tasmania, in the symbols of 'breeding' and respectability, of 'position' and status, and was, to a degree, exaggerated by the presence of Anglo-Indian elements who had already endured the cultural ossification of several decades of colonial India, and brought with them 'English practices' that were already vastly out of date. Even the local people commented on the peculiar, and frequently rigid, social practice of the Anglo-Indian settlers.⁶⁸

It is not surprising that a person like Woodward, the product of sixteen years in Ceylon, found himself 'at home' in his new surrounding, and saw the emulation of English 'customs' and 'keeping up a certain standard', as comfortable and familiar, even if he himself had no particular aspiration in that regard. While Woodward returned briefly to England in

⁶⁷The same disparity can be found among 20th century immigrant communities. Greeks and Italians who migrated before World War II, find not only the post war migrants 'different', but the 'Greece' or 'Italy' of their remembrance, unrecognisable and often disturbing on their return.

⁶⁸Stilwell p26 *passim*. Also see "A Home in the Colonies: Edward Braddon's letters to India from NW Tasmania, 1878." Ed. S. Bennett THRA-P&P Vol.27#4, 1980. pp119-218

1923, he would no doubt have found Tasmanian society more 'familiar' than the post war Britain he would have encountered on his return - a Britain altered beyond recognition and vastly different to his Victorian origins.

The by-gone 'Englishness' echoed in the social habits and stratification of the Rowella community, that he would have found familiar, was, however, detained from social inflexibility by the comparatively small size of the community, the necessities of social intercourse, and the persistent and perverse egalitarianism that characterised Australian behaviour. This latter aspect is in no way better illustrated than by the response to the presence of Robert Menzies,⁶⁹ [Prime Minister - 1939 to 1941; 1949 to 1966], who often, in the years as Opposition Leader (1942-49), spent time as the guest of Gordon Rolph, owner of the *Examiner* newspaper, at his holiday home "Como", on Cherry Point, near Rowella. "Sir Robert claimed he made many momentous decisions in the quiet of his daily walks round the district"⁷⁰ and was treated and greeted in an entirely matter of fact manner by the labourers in the orchards and packing sheds, in a way that belied his importance - with courtesy in the main, but with little deference and occasional, but not unkind, 'cheek'. And he reciprocated by an ease of interaction that contrasted his renowned "contempt and disdain"⁷¹ for 'lesser beings'.

⁶⁹This was a time of reconstruction for Menzies and restoration of conservative forces, by creation of the new 'Liberal Party'. In many respects Rowella-Kayena was where the new Party had its gestation, furthered by the not inconsiderable financial backing and influence of Rolph. The historical links are possibly even more peculiar. According to local rumour, the Russian diplomats, the Petrovs, were initially housed at "Como", when they defected in 1954.

⁷⁰McIntyre *Rowella-Kayena* p48.

⁷¹Manning Clark *Short History of Australia* p235.

Woodward, too, met Menzies, in their mutual ramblings, and invited him to afternoon tea, at precisely the 3:00pm 'tiffin time' of colonial habit and convention.⁷² The subjects of conversation are not known, though Woodward's conservative, anti-labour views⁷³ would have established a common political purpose between the two. His Tory conservatism was emphatic - he disliked the "rascally Lang" though admired the gentle Lyons, "a really fine man",⁷⁴ ironically the person Menzies climbed over to power. Despite Woodward's unusual avocation, he was known as a scholar and 'Cambridge man', and that would have entered him among the socially acceptable and made him prized for his intellectual capacity. Menzies' presence illustrates the middle class stamp on community and, from the understanding that exists of Menzies,⁷⁵ illustrates also, the middle class ambivalence of Australian identity. Menzies "believed passionately that the British had created the highest civilization"⁷⁶ and his life and outlook was a continual example of quiet aspiration for "English" acceptance and the contained conflict of Australian inferiority compared to things British.

⁷²Heyward, N. *A Buddhist Scholar*- notes on the life of F.L.Woodward Esq. and extracts from a broadcast by the author over Tasmanian radio station 7ZR early in 1954.

⁷³Woodward's letters to Miss IB Horner of the Pali Text Society contain many complaints about delays caused through Australian waterfront disputes- "Owing to the Labourites here, who can earn (?) £15 a week and more, for unloading ships etc, and who 'go easy'- ships lie here in ports for a long time costing £1000 a day." FL Woodward to IB Horner 3 May 1951 (FOSL)

Letters to Woodward in the early 50's also contained frequent references to a Communist threat in Ceylon which would have dove-tailed with the perceived Cold War threat and would have explained his anti-Left position aside from a natural Tory inclination. [Letter from P.D (?) Ratnatunga 24 May 1952, just days before Woodward's death, and thus probably never read. Also letter from D Gurusingha, from Mahinda College 3 April 1952. [Source: Shield Heritage, Solicitors, Launceston. FL Woodward file]

⁷⁴ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 15 June 1932 (FOSL). Lang was Labor Premier of NSW, dismissed by Governor Game. Lyons was ex-Labor Premier of Tasmania, who changed political sides to become conservative Prime Minister, in Canberra.

⁷⁵See Brett, J. *Robert Menzies' Forgotten People* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 1992)

⁷⁶ Clark *Short History...* p235.

Woodward reflected within himself many of the displaced elements and ambivalence of his new neighbours. While he adhered strongly to his British heritage, he nonetheless was displaced to its margins and periphery by his ideas, values and religious persuasion, and would probably never have felt entirely comfortable 'at home' in England. Nearly everyone with whom he now had any association came from somewhere else; for no-one was it a place of origin.

Woodward Returns to England and Ceylon

While Woodward was drawn to Tasmania by opportunity, colonial custom, and a conducive social milieu, it seems, from the few clues extant, that he was probably trialing his new home, a not unusual or unreasonable approach, minding it for Halling, but intending to return to Adyar and England before settling permanently. He is described as Hon. Librarian & Director of the Oriental Library, Adyar, the Theosophical Headquarters in India, from about 1922-1925¹ where he also lectured at the Brahmaildyia Ashrama² in the Greek Stoic philosophy of Zeno and the drama of Aeschylus,³ and his position as Director gives some clues as to his interest and intention. From the establishment of the TS in India, Olcott had collected an impressive collection of oriental manuscripts, including many Sinhala, Siamese and Burmese manuscripts, of much value to any intending scholar and translator. Access to these would have been of immense value to Woodward, but whether he contemplated a more extended stay is difficult to say, though some of the currents and events within the TS, at that time, may give some indication.

Woodward arrived in Ceylon in June 1922 on his way to Adyar and visited Mahinda College on 9 June to lay a foundation stone for a shrine room. He was to visit the college on two other occasions, once on his way to England in December, 1923, and again on his way back in March, 1924.⁴ His visit to England was brief indeed, given that boat travel would have made his stay not longer than about eight weeks at most. Though he

¹ Venn JA *Alumni Cantabrigienses* 1954, p574. The *Christ's Hospital Exhibitioners 1566-1923*, p122, states Woodward was Hon. Librarian from 1923 on, though the *Theosophical Year Book 1938* agrees with 1922-25.

² *Theosophical Year Book 1938* p223.

³ *Theosophy in Australia* April 1923, p735. Ashram Lectures by FL Woodward.

⁴ Gunewardene p61.

makes no mention of it, family no doubt figured in his itinerary, but the emphasis, for Woodward, was on visits to friends at Cambridge and to Mrs Rhys Davids of the Pali Text Society. His focus was academic, on the business of translation. He suggested Mrs Rhys Davids wanted him to remain in England to preside over the PTS and to guide and direct its programme,⁵ but he declined the offer, indicating a firm intention to return to Adyar, in the first place, and thence Tasmania, as the tropical climate of India and Ceylon had become, for Woodward, a real consideration.

Access to manuscripts in Adyar, particularly Sinhalese manuscripts of texts and commentaries, helped him to edit, for the PTS, the translation by AD Jayasundera of the second volume of the Anguttara Nikaya (*Book of Numerical Sayings*) in 1925⁶. It also contributed to his highly successful, *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, prepared and edited during his stay in Adyar and first published in 1925. *Some Sayings...* is a highly condensed, ordered and sequential unfolding of the *Tipitaka*, in a particularly western narrative form, the *Tipitaka* itself being repetitious and, to western sensibilities, somewhat disordered, except for the basic three divisions. It was an attempt by Woodward to produce an accessible version of the Canon, not an exposition of Buddhism, as he leaves out, for example the Great Renunciation⁷ which is actually not part of the Pali *Tipitaka*.

⁵ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 5 October 1942 (FOSL. Box 14 IB Horner Collection). Also 1 December 1948.

⁶ Gunewardene p63.

⁷ The story of the Buddha's renunciation of family to set forth as a Wayfarer is based on the story of the young noble Yasa (Vinaya, i.7) and expanded in *Lalita Vistara* and the late *Commentary of the Jataka Tales*. See:

Woodward, FL *Some Sayings of the Buddha* (Oxford: OUP, 1955) World Classics #483, p1.

It is noteworthy that Woodward acknowledges, both the encouragement and obvious financial support of his friend, Peter de Abrew, in Colombo.⁸ Peter de Abrew was a prominent businessman, philanthropist, member of the BTS and advocate of the Buddhist Revival. He was Manager⁹ of Musaeus College (where Woodward's friend Henri Frei was a Member of the Board) and was also a significant patron of the Ceylon Social Reform Society, so while *Some Sayings*.... may have eventually had considerable success in the West as a way of making Buddhist scriptures accessible to Europeans, it served a similar, significant purpose in Ceylon for the English speaking Sinhala elite.

Woodward's efforts in Adyar may have been primarily directed at translation but they took place against an extraordinary background of events taking place within the TS itself, none of which are alluded to in any of Woodward's extant correspondence, a frustration indeed, since his opinion and "recollections of the TS of long ago and its 'worthies' of *the old guard*", would have been fascinating and undoubtedly "droll".¹⁰ Woodward's time in Adyar coincided with a series of tensions, 'power plays' within the organisation, and odd accompanying events.

Annie Besant, President of the TS since Olcott's death, was by this time well into her seventies, beginning to lose some of her undoubted capacities, and coming under the influence of George Arundale¹¹ and, to a

⁸ Woodward *Some Sayings*pxxi.

⁹ Again it needs to be emphasised this position is extremely prestigious in Sri Lanka. Peter de Abrew held a position akin to that of Amarasuriya at Mahinda College.

¹⁰ *Theosophy in Tasmania* Vol.1 No.2 1951p4. These comments were made regarding an intended visit to Woodward in Rowella by TS members from Hobart. He was obviously recognised as a font of information regarding the early period of the TS at Adyar.

¹¹ He became President of the TS on the death of Besant.

lesser extent, James Wedgwood¹² who were deeply involved in the new TS incarnation, the Liberal Catholic Church. Based in Huizen, Holland, one of the sites of Order of the Star of the East (OSE) activities associated with Krishnamurti and the World Teacher movement, Arundale was beginning to assume occult authority, 'bringing through' messages from the TS Masters of the Great White Brotherhood, and distributing Initiations¹³ like confetti. Part of his new authoritative knowledge was to suggest a visit to one of the TS Masters, the Master the Count, on the 'physical plane', at his supposed castle, somewhere in Hungary. This extraordinary plan, whipped all and sundry into excitement and elation since it would 'prove' the existence of the Masters. It involved Besant, Arundale, Wedgwood, and a number of other acolytes, including the Australian, Oscar Kollerstrom,¹⁴ in a bizarre train journey across Europe, beginning 16 August 1925 to, surprisingly, no result except much embarrassment.¹⁵ Leadbeater, naturally, was much annoyed and denied the Initiations which Arundale had 'channelled', and a tussle for authority ensued.

The incident marked a decided, and increasingly extreme, re-orientation of the TS from its Olcott Buddhist phase towards the Liberal Catholic and adventist OSE phase initiated by Leadbeater, and to a lesser extent Wedgwood, from about 1916 onwards. Meanwhile the Krishnamurti

¹² Wedgewood, according to Tillet, was an incorrigible and promiscuous homosexual and drug user, who kept a supply of cocaine secreted in his Bishop's crosier.

¹³ The TS being very hierarchical, envisaged stages of occult advancement, Initiations, granted on the astral plane by the Masters. These were generally announced by Leadbeater who used the undoubted power of his 'privileged' knowledge to great effect and advancement of his own self interest.

¹⁴ In *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, Mary Lutyens, describes Kollerstrom as Dutch whereas he was Australian of Swedish descent.

¹⁵ See Lutyens, M *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening* (London: John Murray, 1975) pp210ff.

Nethercot, AH *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963)

Tillet, G *The Elder Brother: a biography of Charles Webster Leadbeater*

movement, under the OSE banner, which delivered an infectious mix of peace, pacifism, vegetarianism and spirituality, was attracting an extraordinary interest among the post-War young, a membership of over forty thousand and rivalling anything the youth culture of the 1960s had to offer. Thousands of young people from all over Europe would walk, bicycle, or go by train to Ommen, Holland, a kind of Woodstock of the 1920s, for Star Conventions.

In a mounting atmosphere of anticipation, the TS Convention of 1925 at Adyar was seen as particularly auspicious, marking, as it did, fifty years of Theosophy. The popularity of the Star (OSE) organisation and of Krishnamurti, generated considerable anticipation of some manifestation by the 'vehicle' (Krishnamurti) of the Maitreya (*Metteyya*) or Christ. Held in December 1925, Woodward was no doubt among the more than 3000 from around the world who attended the four day meeting, but the results were disappointing and uneventful, except for the constant unseasonable rain and cold, and the quiet, behind the scenes attempts to patch differences between Krishna and the Arundale/Wedgwood factions.¹⁶

On 28 December 1925, however, the day after the TS Convention, the Star Congress began, and Krishnamurti spoke at the first meeting under a Banyan tree, at 8am. Towards the end of his speech, his voice noticeably altered and shifted into the first person, speaking of how "I come for those who want sympathy, who want happiness, who are longing to be released...."¹⁷ It was an electric moment for those who had waited for

The story is far more strange than can be condensed herein.

¹⁶ Lutyens M. p223.

¹⁷ Lutyens M. p224. Those who have heard him speak, attest to Krishnamurti's undoubted charisma and quiet power of speech, the ability all charismatic figures have of being able to make each in an

this overt manifestation of a new Teacher. News spread among the faithful and a sense of impending ‘arrival’ pervaded, though there was an equal amount of general scepticism, not least of which, among the Leadbeater and Arundale/Wedgwood factions. Despite this wondrous happening, the groups that had gathered at Adyar began to disperse towards the end of January 1926, Woodward among them.

What Woodward made of all these events and ‘manifestations’ is difficult to say. He believed powerfully in the *Metteyya* Buddha, but whether he imagined Krishnamurti was the ‘vehicle’ for such an appearance, is impossible to say. Those who knew him say he kept photos of Besant and Krishnamurti in his house,¹⁸ and there is no doubt he continued a belief in the advent of the *Metteyya*, even after Krishnamurti had disbanded the OSE, in 1929, at, appropriately, Ommen. “I maintain that Truth is a pathless land,” he was to say at that momentous meeting, “and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect.....I do not want followers. The moment you follow someone you cease to follow the Truth.”¹⁹

For many, like Lady Emily Lutyens,²⁰ who had devoted herself to Krishnamurti at the expense of her husband and family, it was a devastating blow. The followers of the Star had been prepared to

audience feel he is speaking to them alone. This is contextual however, and thus can never be captured in transcription to the page.

¹⁸ Interview with Nigel Heywood.

¹⁹ Lutyens, M. p272. This extraordinary statement of apparent denial, ironically, did in fact lead Krishnamurti to become a peripatetic world teacher. His selfless denial, however, is somewhat undermined by more recent revelations. For an interesting and revealing view of the charismatic Krishnamurti, see

Sloss, RR. *Lives in the Shadow with J Krishnamurti* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991) and

Yglesias, H *The Saviours* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987.) This novel only vaguely disguises Krishnamurti.

sacrifice all and work unceasingly for the Coming, now they were no longer needed and their cause had evaporated. Like many victims of sects and causes, they were left abandoned, disillusioned and purposeless, a scenario played out over and over ever since, and probably from long before. Leaders of the TS, like Leadbeater, Wedgwood and Arundale, put their own explanation and ‘spin’ on events to extricate themselves from the embarrassment of Krishnamurti’s defection. Besant remained loyal but confused.

Woodward expressed no view, on the record, of his feelings. Part of him was a Theosophist of the old school, one of the ‘Band of Servers’ who avoided the politics of the TS and simply saw these events as a passing difficulty like so many other difficulties along ‘The Path’. For him the process was essential, the arrival, inconsequential.²¹ Woodward probably looked more with sorrow than hurt on the departure of Krishnamurti, a view echoed in a letter to Woodward from a TS friend at the Manor many years later.

Krishnaji seems to have been doing his usual amount of upsetting! Whatever it is, he gives people furiously to think! [sic] I suppose a period of pulling down & -maybe- rebuilding is a strenuous time, but almost no one that I have seen going through that experience is at all happy!²²

²⁰ See Lutyens, Lady Emily, *Candles in the Sun* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957) and Lutyens, M. *Krishnamurti: the Years of Awakening*. p279. Krishnamurti gave Lady Emily considerable, unreasonable grief over publication of *Candles* and delayed its publication for a number of years.

²¹ For a fascinating examination of such a construct, see Caputo, JD. *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997)

²² Letter to FL Woodward from “Flora” 13 April 1952, Shield Heritage Woodward File. This letter is written with some affection to “My dear Francisco”, with “love from Florence, alias ‘Flora’” on Woodward’s birthday, which indicates an obviously close association, but whether she represents the ‘Susannah’ EM Hare was to suspect Woodward ‘kept dark’ is impossible to say. The alias “Flora” may well be a code name from the *Lives...* period of the TS, in which case she represents a very old and long acquaintance.

Whatever his view on Krishnamurti, Woodward was a person of varied interests and personal resources, undeterred by the machinations of others; he was prepared to sacrifice his energies but not himself.

He returned to Tasmania determined to settle permanently and to further his work of translation. In partnership with his friend Henri Frei, Woodward purchased "Bhatkawa",²³ which had been built originally in 1911. Little is known of Frei (1882-1940?) who was a Swiss Theosophist employed in Ceylon by Volkart,²⁴ a venerable firm of exporters and importers. Like Woodward, and his friend and fellow translator, EM Hare, Frei never married, though he was a most 'eligible' man, softly spoken, cultured, reserved and handsome with "a goodness about him".²⁵

Frei was General Secretary of the Ceylon TS from 1926-27, Asst. General Secretary in Australia (1927-1929) and Private Secretary to Leadbeater in Sydney from 1929 till Leadbeater's death in 1934.²⁶ He later returned to Adyar and held a number of positions on the TS General Council and Headquarters Executive Committee until 1937, then retired to Madampe, Ceylon where he was Chairman of the Board of Musaeus College in Colombo. Frei died while still occupying that position in the 1940s. Whether he intended to retire in Tasmania is uncertain, though doubtful. He is known to have visited a number of times in the late 20s

²³Gunewardene [p59] states Woodward purchased "Chartley" with Frei, from Halling, which is a confusion. "Chartley", which Woodward rented when he first came to Tasmania, is on the other side of Point Rapid from "Bhatkawa".

²⁴ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.VI Nos. 4&5 June 1936. This report of a visit to Woodward in Tasmania suggests a number of erroneous details. The author suggested Woodward (1936) was the "president of the Cricket, Football, Badminton and other Clubs of this little village", which is news to those who lived there and can never remember Woodward joining any community association. He also suggests 'Bhatkawa' had "12 rooms"- there were about 6- which is a considerable exaggeration.

²⁵ Source: personal interview with Norma Kollerstrom Morton who was sister to the Oscar Kollerstrom who joined Arundale and Besant in pursuit of the Master the Count.

and early 30s, for periods of up to several months,²⁷ joining Woodward on his daily 'round' of several miles, but always finding the last haul up the road from Waterton dam to the house quite strenuous. Woodward would delight in pointing out to his friend EM Hare, the point on the path where 'Old Frei' would begin to "puff and blow"!²⁸

Frei's TS career gives some indication of his attitudes and opinions, which he probably shared with Woodward. The fact that he became a secretary to Leadbeater clearly aligned him with that faction, the Liberal Catholic Church group, and the control of the TS in Australia, which emanated from the Manor (the centre of ES - Esoteric Section - activity). It also clearly distanced him from the schism initiated by Krishnamurti in the dissolution of the OSE and resignation from the TS, in 1929. His return to positions at Adyar, after Leadbeater's death and the assumption of the TS Presidency by George Arundale, again, aligns Frei with the conventional, official TS line - another loyal member of Theosophy's "Band of Servers".

It is sometimes difficult for people to imagine that those close to the leadership of a hierarchy can be anything but 'in the know'. The truth is often quite the contrary; sometimes proximity is the greatest barrier to knowledge and understanding, and not simply because of denial. It is quite conceivable that Frei, and Woodward, because of their simple trust and belief, were largely unaware of the more extreme undercurrents of the Theosophical Society and the fragile personae of their hierarchical heroes. People often ignore clues others find obvious, or allow trust to

²⁶ *Theosophical Society Year Book* 1938, p180.

²⁷ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.VI Nos. 4&5 June 1936, p74.

over-ride suspicion, and it must be borne in mind that much of our information on the Theosophical Society and Krishnamurti, has been only available recently and represents the wisdom of hindsight. The TS has, not unreasonably, felt deeply hurt by these revelations, particularly when they are exaggerated or simply wrong. What is easy to forget, is that the Theosophical Society, like any organisation, has always had within its ranks, people of great talent, good intent, and genuine spiritual inclination, along with the lunatic and bizarre, though the latter make much more interesting reading.

People like Woodward and Frei represent the former category, people of worth and endeavour, kindness and sincerity; people without manipulative intent or personal hubris, in whose company we can safely rest. Frei went on to continue his work promoting the cause of Theosophy, while Woodward returned to Tasmania and the task of translation. While “Bhatkawa” was purchased in both names, it is doubtful Frei ever intended retirement in Tasmania; it seemed more like the gesture of a friend, an ‘investment’ in an occasional holiday home, since both men were extremely private, and Frei had no occupation or interest to engage him in Tasmania, as had Woodward. Woodward returned to Tasmania, in 1926, and he never left again, remaining in his “ashrama” among his translations and manuscripts.

²⁸ Letter EM Hare to FL Woodward 14 May 1952, Shield Heritage Woodward File. This letter was written a week before Woodward died and was never read by him. Hare was reminding Woodward of fond reminiscences.

The Trek to Tasmania

Over the years, ex-pupils and friends like Hare and Frei, made the journey to “Bhatkawa”. Even after his death, they came; Mr Albert Witanachchi,¹ when a parliamentary officer in Ceylon, visited the house in 1967, with the then local member of parliament, Mr Gil Duthie, MHR.² Woodward described his life at “Bhatkawa” succinctly, “I am here just a *thalagoya* and never leave the radius of my *ashrama*”³ Even so, he was regarded as a local curiosity, prompting one little girl to innocently repeat the community joke - “Mr Woodward, people say you are the 8th Wonder of the World”.⁴ It was a good humoured tilt at Woodward’s peculiarity, which intended no slight and indicated, despite his reclusive life, he nonetheless attracted curiosity, though not adverse or critical attention. He always gave as good as he got and was quick to poke fun at anyone, himself included. When one ex-student announced he intended to visit, he wrote back,

after all these years ..you are probably *bald-headed and grey* (but I am not). I will look out for you at the station and you will recognise me by being *hatless*. (Australians consider the hat as part of the body, and even *sleep* with it on, I believe).⁵

Here his clowning humour is obvious, but sometimes it clearly misses. The same visitor, when he suggested he would hire a car and drive to Rowella, was dissuaded by Woodward, who offered, instead, to meet him

¹ Personal interview with Albert Witanachchi, Colombo, May 1997.

² Witanachchi, A “Ashes are Good for Roses” in Wijeratne et.al. *Centuries of Memories*.p63ff. I interviewed Mr Duthie before his death but unfortunately age had dimmed his memory. Also Gunewardene p73-76, reprints an article by Witanachchi.

³ *Mahinda College Magazine* 1952. This was Woodward’s last message to the school, which was about to celebrate its Jubilee. A *thalagoya* is a harmless lizard and an *ashrama* is a religious retreat.

⁴ M.S.G “Mr FL Woodward” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.VI Nos. 4&5 June 1936, p75. The author was obviously not aware this was a facetious remark repeated innocently. At a time when all children were brought up on the ‘7 Wonders of the World’, the temptation, in jest, to call someone the 8th was often overwhelming!

in Launceston (as he could get a free ride, in and out, with the postman and local storekeeper, Mr Harris). His intention was obviously to save his visitor unnecessary expense, but it was expressed in a droll way that seemed to completely elude the recipient. He wrote that his visitor should not drive down because,

- (a) It would cost you £5 for the day.
- (b) Your chauffeur would never find this place....
- (c) I should have to feed him. ⁶

Instead of clowning, however, this was seen as an indication of his dire poverty. As Albert Witanachchi aptly expresses it,

Addressing a meeting....Mark Twain said; "Shakespeare is dead, Milton is dead...and I too am feeling far from well." There was a dead silence! Years later when his fame had spread...he repeated the same joke....[and] There was loud applause. Response to humour is unpredictable. I am aware I am on tricky ground when I write on Woodward's wit and humour.⁷

This was always a difficulty with Woodward whose straight faced drollery was almost constant, though frequently missed or misunderstood.

A story is told of a young Salvation Army woman, who once burst in on Woodward and declared, "Mr Woodward I have brought you God's message." Woodward gravely replied, "If you have any message for Him, my dear, you couldn't do better than give it to me to deliver, for the chances are I shall be seeing Him before you." The woman's response was puzzlement and uncertainty as to what was intended, though Woodward, behind a very straight face, was immensely delighted with the result, and obviously regaled anyone who would listen with the story.

⁵ M.S.G "Mr FL Woodward" p74. Woodward's emphasis.

⁶ M.S.G "Mr FL Woodward" p74.

⁷ Witanachchi, A. "Ashes are good for roses" in Wijeratne, Dantanarayana, & Samara-Wickrama (ed) *Centuries of Memories* p63.

EM Hare and Woodward.

A similar vein of humour and banter ran through Woodward's relationship with his fellow translator EM Hare, another visitor to "Bhatkawa"⁸. Hare would constantly produce doggerel, including a version of "Alice in Blunderland",⁹ satirising personalities in the world of Pali scholarship at the time with 'in-joke' humour I suspect was probably libellous. All the Pali scholars and PTS personalities had none too subtle nicknames in their correspondence, though Woodward, while similarly inclined to banter and nonsense, would sometimes respond in charming self parody.

The Master writes: "My simple intellect does not soar beyond the spirit of the verse:-

I put my hat upon my head & walked into the strand,
And there I saw another man, whose hat was in his hand.¹⁰

Hare always addressed Woodward as 'The Master', a sign of humoured mock deference that harboured a genuine respect all the same, while Woodward, with his habit of nick-names, always called Hare, 'Eustace', because, as he explained to IB Horner,¹¹ Caroline Rhys Davids (PTS President) in her dotage once confused EM Hare's initial names (Edward Miles) with the more famous 'Eustace Miles', who was evidently the inventor of that stygian health spread, 'Marmite'. This, for Woodward, was altogether too amusing to let go, and the sobriquet stuck thereafter.

Edward Miles Hare (generally known as Miles) was born 4 March 1893 in Leicester of a large family of nine brothers and two sisters. He was

⁸ In Gunewardene, p73 & 74, quoting Witanachchi, he describes "Fry" and "FM Hart" as visitors. These were obviously Frei and EM Hare.

⁹ FOSL records. 'Alice' was their mutual nick-name for IB Horner; the Scandinavian translator Helmer-Smith was 'The Helmsman' and so they go on, though, like all nick-names, not necessarily complimentary.

¹⁰ Letter EM Hare to C. Rhys Davids 24 November 1940, IB Horner Collection (FOSL).

¹¹ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner, 5 October, 1942.(FOSL)

educated at Stamford, as were all his brothers,¹² which was where he met Woodward, then a teacher at Stamford. At eighteen (c.1912) he went to Ceylon to work for the Galaha Tea Estate in the Kandyan high country but returned in 1914 to serve in the Leicester Regiment and was wounded in action. After the Great War he return to Ceylon, eventually becoming Manager of the Galaha Estate¹³ before he retired in about 1948,¹⁴ after 37½ years in Ceylon.¹⁵

He was not a member of the TS though his acquaintance with Woodward undoubtedly spurred his interest in Pali translation. He was responsible for a PTS translation of the *Woven Cadences* (1947) and volumes III & IV (1934 & 1935) of the *Book of Gradual Sayings*, but more particularly for much of the editing of the *Pali Concordance* begun by Woodward. While they were friends they seemed continually to spar and Woodward could be critical of Hare's work as a translator,

There are several howlers in his vol.[*Gradual Sayings*] Which I have gently shown him. Some he admits, others explains away.¹⁶

And it was not simply the mistakes that raised his criticism, it was Hare's approach and style generally

Eustace does go wide of the mark sometimes in his efforts to be strikingly literal,¹⁷

a difficulty, one might add, for all pioneering translators trying to render appropriately.

¹² *The Stamfordian, Summer Term 1938*. EM Hare and his nine brothers, who attended Stamford between 1887-1910 donated a clock to the Cricket pavilion. Actually it was probably Woodward's friendship with EM Hare's older brother, Charles, a fellow theosophist, that created the connection in Ceylon with Woodward.

¹³ Hand written outline of the career of EM Hare written by his sister at the request of the solicitor of his estate. Box 13 IB Horner Collection (FOSL). The sister was unsure of the date of his retirement.

¹⁴ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 20 February 1949. (FOSL). Hare mentions his retirement at the end of the previous year. Oliver in *Buddhism in Britain* says, incorrectly, 1950.

¹⁵ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 9 June 1949. (FOSL)

¹⁶ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 12 December 1934. (FOSL)

¹⁷ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 16 January 1935. (FOSL)

It was an odd friendship between the two confirmed bachelors, partly good humoured banter, though occasionally resistant as when Woodward ‘suggested’ insistently that Hare retire and take up the task of the Concordance; “of course he hopes for me to edit his Concordance work!”¹⁸ Woodward hinted and coaxed Hare into work on the Concordance, obviously recognising he was unlikely ever to finish it himself, so Hare’s previous comment was undoubtedly justified. In return Hare would tease and needle his friend over his odd ideas.

I used to anger him with laughter at his waywardness - Theosophy, astrology, Bacon-cypher & such ‘rarities’. (I wonder whether Ananda ever roused the Buddha - I hope so - yes! when the latter ‘asked’ A[nanda] to beg him to live for a Kalpa![aeon] - if properly read there are some good human stories in the books!)¹⁹

There is, in this statement, an acknowledgment of Woodward’s special status and regard in Hare’s mind - placing himself as an Ananda to Woodward’s Buddha - reverential, but keenly aware of Woodward’s human frailty, and unable to deny himself some disrespectful teasing. The ‘Woodward’ Hare saw was a person of undeniable special, even saintly, qualities, but nevertheless profoundly human. Despite their friendship, Woodward remained enigmatic and impenetrable, prompting Hare’s mischievous speculation after Woodward’s death- “I never heard of The Master’s Susannah [sic] (no doubt he kept it dark!).”²⁰

Regardless of Hare’s prurient conjecture, Woodward was a proud and independent man. Even after having been ill in hospital he would not

¹⁸ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner, 15 June 1945. (FOSL). Hare’s emphasis.

¹⁹ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 26 December 1952. (FOSL) after Woodward’s death. Ananda was the Buddha’s closest disciple. A ‘Kalpa’ is an enormous historical cycle, roughly translated as ‘aeon’.

²⁰ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 26 December 1952. (FOSL). The allusion is to ‘Susanna and the Elders’, which I assume implies some secret mistress in Woodward’s closet. Whether the earlier mentioned letter to “Dear Francisco” would satisfy Hare’s suspicion is impossible to say.

accept a neighbour's offer to look after him²¹ in her home, nor accept charity from anyone even when his finances were strained. As Hare put it in his waggish way, "he sounds a bit hard up, but is 'very proud'- as to receiving 'gifts of charity'- he thinks maybe: 'Only monks do that, & then not gold & silver!' Well!"²²

Hare visited Woodward several times, once in 1931 and again ten years later in 1941²³ when he went to Tasmania to recover from a stomach and heart ailment, thus repeating the colonial pattern of Tasmania as a destination for rest and recreation. When he arrived in 1941, however, Woodward himself was in hospital recovering from an operation for a hernia - "an immense druidic monolith"²⁴- that had given him considerable discomfort over several years, following a previous operation in 1938. This is not surprising as Woodward was inclined to display his undoubted physical strength by lifting alone large stay posts,²⁵ to the astonishment of neighbours. No wonder he had a hernia. Hare's stay with Woodward was rewarding however: he finished typing up his manuscript of the *Woven Cadences*, leaving a copy with Woodward in case the war literally sank his manuscript on the way to England; and he obviously enjoyed the peace of Tasmania that was in such contrast to events in Europe.

I have had an awfully good holiday here - done much digging, firewood chopping and laundry work - herein lies *ussada*: thoughts of 'prominence'!

²¹ Personal interview Leila Brady (McIntyre). Also Gunewardene p75.

²² Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 25 July 1948. (FOSL). The allusion is to the fact the while monks may receive *dana* they were prohibited from handling gold and silver, an injunction not particularly adhered to today in many Theravadin countries. Woodward did accept Hare's payment of his hospital expenses, but it is Woodward who admits this [Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 25 June 1941 (FOSL)] not Hare, who obviously respected Woodward's pride.

²³ Letter EM Hare to Caroline Rhys Davids 28 March 1941 box 14 IB Horner Collection (FOSL)

²⁴ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 25 June 1941. (FOSL)

²⁵ Stay posts for a conventional fence would be 6-7 feet long, anywhere from 10-18 inches in diameter, and made of unseasoned hardwood which is extremely heavy. Source: interview with Leila Brady.

‘The Master’ I am glad to say is simply A.1 in health and is out all day chopping and trimming his trees.²⁶

There was between the two men a respect for distance and space, which they both valued. Woodward described Hare as

a curious mixture - fond of detailed intensive work, believing nothing that is beyond his nose - disbelieving anything unusual, occult or unrevealed - independent and tends to the hermetic life - but not a real hermit like myself! Must have his club and dress suit.²⁷

Though undoubtedly holding each other in much esteem, they were humoured by one another’s foibles and never resiled from mutual, if gentle, chiding. It was a relationship tempered by a quiet rivalry and an almost sibling contest of wills, never more evident than in their efforts to produce a Pali Concordance.

Concordance.

The then President of the Pali Text Society, Caroline Rhys Davids, in 1933, asked Hare, after his earlier efforts with the *Gradual Sayings*, to consider editing the work Woodward was commencing on a Pali Concordance.²⁸ Hare was humbled and flattered by Rhys Davids’ offer, considering he had no tertiary education, being a graduate only of the nineteenth century amateur tradition. It was, however, if the truth is told, an offer largely couched in hope and just a little desperation. It was an extraordinarily thankless and laborious lexicographic task, which, as Woodward suggested, was not unlike the effort required by Murray to compile the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). Caroline Rhys Davids, however, had a somewhat more casual view, describing it to Woodward

²⁶ Letter EM Hare to Caroline Rhys Davids 2 June 1941. IB Horner Collection (FOSL).

²⁷ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 17 November 1937.(FOSL)

²⁸ Letter EM Hare to C. Rhys Davids 6 December 1933. IB Horner Collection (FOSL)

as something “any intelligent child could do” - after all it was only a collection of words! Woodward would often repeat this remarkable observation in his letters to others with the addition, “I should like to see this child!”²⁹

Though the task was considerable, Woodward nevertheless wanted a comprehensive work - “The Master writes in great form - will have no mean concordance- it must be a work of wonder & delight of *devas* and mankind!”³⁰ In Woodward’s view, “if we make a start our successors will continue.”³¹ Hare, more cautious, recognised that it would mean a lifetime, if not many lifetimes work, and sought something more modest, though “we don’t want to discourage FLW & so I should let him have his way - he is now over 70!”³² - meaning, no doubt, that he was not going to live much longer, after which they could do what they preferred.

Woodward was dismissive of Hare’s emphasis on economy, caused, he caustically commented, by Hare “having been a tea-man so long”.³³ Woodward always saw things in the broad, well beyond his own efforts, and would not relinquish the ambition of his work. It was a tussle of intentions argued subtly through their correspondence with both Rhys Davids and Horner, though a compromise on method and inclusion was eventually arrived at.³⁴

²⁹ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 1 December 1948, (FOSL)

³⁰ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 12 September 1945 (FOSL). *Devas* are ‘angels’ or ‘gods’.

³¹ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 27 November 1943. (FOSL)

³² Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 27 November 1943. (FOSL)

³³ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner, 20 January 1950. (FOSL). There was, according to Woodward, a similar economy of style in Hare’s translations, that left in them unfulfilling to the reader.

³⁴ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 14 October 1943 (FOSL). By this time a compromise was emerging though it was still an issue of what to include and exclude even after the Concordance passed into the hands of Warder and others.

It was a task they all recognised as essential scholarship but not necessarily valued by scholars who took such resources for granted. Hare's acerbic view was "that scholars are like accountants- its not the latter who do the business!"³⁵ However, while lexicographic tasks are rarely rewarded and rarely acknowledged, a Pali Concordance is invaluable not only to the Pali scholar studying the Buddhist Canon for doctrinal and philosophic purposes, it is also valuable for linguistic research (philology), for the establishment of chronology, and also for historical research, "especially social and economic history, for which the Pali provides exceptionally rich and reliable documentation."³⁶

Work on a Concordance began early in the century with 'slips' collected by the American Buddhist scholar Lanman, and later by Edmund Hardy in Switzerland, (with whom Woodward corresponded and established a 'password' for communication from the 'hereafter'). The project languished until Caroline Rhys Davids revived the idea and urged it on to Woodward, who was one of the few dedicated and reliable workers in the field.³⁷ It was a responsibility of inordinate complexity, requiring an encyclopaedic knowledge of the texts and language, as well as a "passionate patience"³⁸ and dedication, qualities Woodward had in admirable abundance.

³⁵ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 27 November 1943. (FOSL).

³⁶ Woodward, FL & Hare, EM and others *Pali Tipitika Concordance* Vol. III, Part I (London: PTS, 1963) Introduction by AK Warder, piv.

³⁷ Woodward, FL and others *Pali Tipitika Concordance* Vol. I: A-O, (London: PTS, 1956) Preface by EM Hare, piii.

³⁸ This the description TW Rhys Davids, founder of the PTS, applied to Childers, compiler of the first Pali dictionary in the 1870's, in the *British Dictionary of National Biography*. Cited by Cone, M "Lexicography, Pali & Pali Lexicography" *Journal of the Pali Text Society* Vol. XXII, 1996 p14-15.

The tedium of the task is difficult to appreciate, though any glance at the work of Johnson or Murray³⁹ would be enough to dissuade even the most dedicated enthusiast. During World War II, Woodward informed IB Horner that he had over a hundredweight (50kg) of 'slips' to be sent to England after the war for editing, an indication of the extraordinary effort he applied to the task. It raised mirth between Horner and Hare though, as to how Woodward was going to manage the cost of postage.

Woodward began the work only,

after he had read all the books of the *Tipitaka* twenty times. With the exception of the *Anguttara Nikaya*, *Sutta Nipata* and *Nidessa*, Woodward worked on all 28 books [of the *Tipitaka*] for the Concordance.⁴⁰

It was a daunting undertaking and certainly not the path to wealth and fame. It was though, characteristic of Woodward that he should adopt so undervalued an undertaking, spending the last fifteen years of his life⁴¹ concurring words of the *Tipitaka*. Only the first volume, or fascicle, was published before he died in 1952. After his death EM Hare continued the task as Woodward had intended, and when Hare died in 1958,⁴² the work continued under the guidance of AK and NR Warder.

Still the Concordance remains incomplete, victim of the small world of available Pali scholars and the march of technology. Today with the transfer of the *Tipitaka* on to CD-ROM, with its capacity to interrogate

³⁹ Murray, KME *Caught in the Web of Words: James Murray and the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979)

⁴⁰ Ratnatunga, PD Mudaliyar "Frank Lee Woodward" *The Buddhist* July 1952 Colombo: YMBA p51.

⁴¹ Heywood *A Buddhist Scholar*. p22.

⁴² Oliver *Buddhism in Britain*, claims Hare died in 1955 whereas, according to his Will [Somerset House] he died 26 October 1958 at Henry Gawin Hospital, Alton, Hampshire, leaving an estate of £23577/10/5, a £1000 to go to the PTS for publication of the Concordance, and with a codicil, of course, that he be cremated.

and cross-reference vast numbers of texts, the purpose of a concordance recedes in importance, the boxes of interminable 'slips' laboriously collected, remaining unedited in the archives of Cambridge. Therein lies an irony Woodward would have appreciated; that such effort could evaporate in importance in a twinkling of technology. *SABBAM ANICCAM*, everything is impermanent.

The Task of Translation.

The former British Home Office Minister Lord Elton got proceedings off to a jolly start in the plenary session with a reference to the philosopher Schleiermacher, who said that every language has a particular mode of thought which could not be repeated the same way in any other language.

"Schleiermacher almost certainly wrote his work in German," Lord Elton said. "If so, what we have purports to be a translation of a statement that no statement can be translated. It follows, does it not, that if this statement is true, it was not made by Schleiermacher - and conversely, if it was made by Schleiermacher, then this is not what he said."

As the American Journalist HL Mencken once said: "There is no record in history of a happy philosopher."⁴³

The expression, *traduttore, traditore*, to translate is to traduce, sums up eloquently the dilemma of translation and translator - the process can represent everything from sweet seduction to violation. In the case of the band of nineteenth century European philologists and language enthusiasts, the approach had much in keeping with the imperial process, an appropriation rather than a mutual rendering, and irrespective of the mindfulness of the translator they were prey to that arrogance. Woodward, similarly, could not escape the inclination to view his renderings as definitive. He was, though, a pioneer in a period of pioneers.

His work has rarely been superseded and remains seminal, principally because few have stepped forward with the same enthusiasm (or madness) for such labour and tedium, despite the quantum growth of

universities. It was a rare madness that possessed such pioneers, no better illustrated than by Henry Coleridge, first editor of the OED, (before Murray), who died, in 1861, at 31, from consumption. When told the dire prognosis of his illness, “he is reported to have exclaimed, ‘I must begin Sanskrit tomorrow’!”⁴⁴ A man obviously not inclined to waste time.

Pali remains one of the more obscure of the nineteenth century philological enthusiasms and few in the west have any knowledge of it, apart from recognising it as the language of the Theravadin Canon. There has been considerable debate about the origins of Pali: KR Norman, the distinguished Pali scholar and former President of the Pali Text Society, observed that Pali “must.... be assumed to be an artificial literary language”, a form of “Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit”,⁴⁵ and represents a derivation from other Prakrit. Despite views to the contrary, including Woodward’s, it was unlikely to have been the language of the Buddha and unlikely to have been the earliest rendering of the canon and cannot be regarded as *the* primary source. It is, though, the language of the Theravadin Canon, and the Theravadin tradition insists on its precedence, dating itself to the Buddha or at least to the Third Council in the third century BCE. However, as Edward Conze, the Buddhist scholar, observed,

If the canon of one school [Theravadin] has reached us intact, and in its entirety, this is not due to its greater antiquity or intrinsic merit, but to the accidents of historical transmission.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Sydney Morning Herald* 25/8/88 Report on the World Congress of Philosophy, Brighton UK. I am grateful to Dr Peter Masefield for drawing my attention to this quotation.

⁴⁴ Cone, M. “The IB Horner Lecture 1995: Lexicography, Pali and Pali Lexicography” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* Vol. XXII, 1996. p3.

⁴⁵ Norman KR *Collected Papers* Vol.III (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1992) p37.

⁴⁶ Conze, E *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies* 1967 p4. Cited in Norman Vol.III p40.

Controversy with respect to the origin and composition of Pali is not entirely resolved but that is not the task of the present work to ponder,⁴⁷ rather to consider early pioneers like Woodward. The task of producing editions (Pali transcribed into Roman script) and translations into English of canonical texts was an extraordinary interest and task, academically obscure, and primarily relevant to Indologists, anthropologists, philologists, and scholars of comparative religion. Like those who pore over Biblical texts, the task is exacting and time consuming, but whereas Biblical scholars may have anything up to five thousand versions to compare in relation to any meaning, word usage, sentence construction or phraseology, Pali scholars, at that time, were unlikely to have more than a handful to compare, sometimes only two or three, and even only one as in the case of the PTS edition of *Buddhavamsa-atthakatha*.

These are matters of grave concern to Pali scholars,⁴⁸ as many of the early editions and translations are so redolent with error as to render them misleading. Editors were often amateurs, like Woodward, inclined to select text, structure and meanings arbitrarily, on the basis of what appealed personally, a kind of 'intuitive' translation as Norman has described it, an invitation to arrogance that did not escape Woodward. The correspondence of Hare, Woodward, Horner and Caroline Rhys Davids is full of conjecture regarding meaning and context. Woodward in

⁴⁷ For reference to these issues ,see:

Norman KR *Collected Papers* Vol.s I, II, III, IV (Oxford: Pali Text Society 1991-94)

Banerji SC *An Introduction to Pali Literature* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak , 1964)

Law BC *A History of Pali Literature* Vol I & II (Varanasi: Bhartiya Publishing House)

Geiger, W *Pali Literature and Language* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta,1956)

⁴⁸ I am indebted to Dr Primoz Pecenko of the Faculty of Asian Studies, South & West Asia Centre, Australian National University and to Dr Peter Masfield, Visiting Scholar, Sydney University, both reputable Pali scholars, for a number of fascinating conversations and correspondence on the matter of Pali translation.

concording, established hundreds of words that did not even appear in the then available dictionaries.

Potentially arrogant or not, intuition, a 'sixth sense', was then and remains, vital in translation, but it arises from a compound of "intelligence, sensitivity, [and] knowledge",⁴⁹ elements that did not always temper the efforts of early pioneers. In one case, Caroline Rhys Davids arbitrarily ordered the omission of all hyphens in compounded words (but forgot to close the consequent gaps) because her late husband did not like hyphens.⁵⁰ This was truly a pioneer period of endeavour remarkable more for the quality of what was produced than the annoying errors that crept in through printing errors, punctuation, rendition or the vagaries of text.

For the Christian scholar finding out exactly or originally what was said or written is extremely important, predicated on an assumption that what is original is necessarily somehow more authentic. The task is thus to laboriously trace each manuscript in terms of its antiquity and the mistakes of copyists. Indigenous Buddhist scholars in the East sometimes find this approach somewhat puzzling. There have been Buddhist councils from the beginning where the task has been to agree on what the texts should read, to 'rid them of copyists errors', and that having been determined, there remains nothing to dispute - the text is the text. Since the *dharma* is immutable, the task is only to 'tidy' the errors, not examine doctrinal evolution through the texts.

This 'cleansing' last took place in Burma at the convened fifth council (1868-71) and the complete *Tipitaka* was inscribed on 729 stone slabs

⁴⁹ Newmark, *P A Textbook of Translation* (NY: Prentice Hall, 1995) p4.

around the Kuthodaw Pagoda in Mandalay.⁵¹ They were re-inked and copied for the sixth council in Rangoon in 1954-56 to mark the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's birth. Debating the merits of particular manuscripts is likely to be greeted with a puzzled response and reference to the inscribed stones. What is there to discuss? This marks the substantial attitudinal difference in the European and Eastern approach and preoccupation. This difference is significant and places a substantial distance between the work of the Pali Text Society and its contributors like Woodward - who adhere to the European textual approach - and the scholars of the temples in Theravadin cultures.

The issue of texts underscores some problems for the Pali copyist and the considerable opportunity for error in transcribing Pali. Not only are there significant similarities in some of the Pali symbols, leading to some absurd misunderstandings, but also copying on to *ola* (palm) leaf parchments is accomplished by a stylus which only scores or etches the parchment, leaving it difficult to read until it is rendered legible by rubbing ink into the scored text. The chances of repeated or omitted text - the bane of every copyist - is thus much greater than where ink is applied directly on to paper.

From the point of view of editors and translators, the quality of the manuscript is paramount and transcribing errors, particularly when using a limited number of comparable texts, can distort any final product. Further difficulties arise where European translators come up against cultural metaphors and analogies - and there are far more in Pali than in English. They frequently misconstrued or found them difficult to render into

⁵⁰ Norman KR *Collected Papers* Vol. IV (Oxford: PTS, 1993) p82.

English or simply found it difficult to decide whether to render accurately or for sense and meaning.

For the pioneer editor and translator there were substantial difficulties, not least of which, for Woodward, was his choice of living in Tasmania, at considerable distance from scholastic centres and access to texts. Nevertheless, while his work is not without criticism, Woodward's output was prodigious and of high quality given all the limitations alluded to. IB Horner described Woodward as "one of the most meticulous, erudite and productive scholars".⁵² Margaret Cone, Pali lexicographer, presently working at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge, on a new Pali-English Dictionary for the PTS, regards Woodward as an accurate translator, and, though he sometimes misunderstood a passage, or its point, he was better than many of his contemporaries. Cone points out that his greatest weaknesses appear in his attempts to translate verse. Rendering verse into verse compounds the translator's difficulties, and Woodward, like his contemporaries, was inclined to use irritating English archaisms. His rendering, too, of important 'technical terms' was often not good, though this may be partly a result of adhering to some of Caroline Rhys Davids firmly held views.⁵³

Others, like the Prof Gombrich of Oxford, the present President of the Pali Text Society, regard Woodward as "Not very eminent [as a translator] I'm afraid", though better than EM Hare.

⁵¹ Norman KR "Pali Literature" in Gonda, J *A History of Indian Literature* Vol. VII, Fasc.2, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983) p12-13.

⁵² Woodward FL *Paramattha-Dipani Theragatha-Atthakatha: The commentary of Dhammapalacariya* Vol. II Introduction by IB Horner (London: Luzac, 1952, reprinted 1958) pviii.

⁵³ Personal conversation, May 1997, and correspondence February, 1999.

The volumes he translated for the Pali Text Society are not badly done, but his translations cannot be described as definitive, and will need to be redone in due course.⁵⁴

Dr Peter Masefield, translator of the *Udana Commentary*, a work edited by Woodward, is even more scathing, accusing him of nonsensical punctuation, wrong identification of sources, imposition of his own readings and producing a text so “riddled with errors, misprints and misunderstandings, that it is often tantamount to being useless.”⁵⁵ While Masefield’s comments no doubt have validity, Woodward himself recognised the problem in a letter to CA Rhys Davids, in 1934.

the text of *Udana* is very poor (and meanly executed too)...There are many errors and sentences omitted etc wrong diacritics. So it would be a pity to photograph it [for re-publication]. It should be renewed when necessary.⁵⁶

As Cone observes, Woodward’s editions, while not perfect, would have been difficult to be otherwise at the time he made them, and certainly not the worst the PTS published.⁵⁷

In personal conversation, Masefield, readily acknowledges Woodward’s historical and pioneering significance, particularly his prodigious output, but there is a sense, in Masefield’s mind, that Woodward was working with great speed to cover as much as possible, without adequate attention to detail, a criticism that seems plausible given Woodward’s output. That Woodward was inclined to believe he ‘knew best’ when it came to a rendering is also plausible, having, as he had, imperialist genes and a personally autocratic style. None of this detracts from his pioneering

⁵⁴ Personal correspondence 12 April 1995.

⁵⁵ Masefield, P. *The Udana Commentary* Vol. I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994) pxii.

⁵⁶ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 21 February 1934. (FOSL)

⁵⁷ Personal correspondence, February 1999.

accomplishment that still leaves his work as a primary source for those in the field. What Dr Johnson said of the lexicographer, could similarly be said of editors and translators of texts. They were, he suggested, the

slave of science, the pioneer of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths of learning and Genius, who press forward to conquest and glory without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress. Every other author may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompense has been granted to very few.⁵⁸

Woodward's Translations.

Woodward's work can be classified into a number of categories. In the first category is his work compiling the Pali Concordance, which has been discussed previously. In the second category are his more accessible and popular translations such as his *Buddhist Stories*, which were printed individually, often repeatedly, in many English journals in Ceylon. Collected in book form, they were distributed widely in Buddhist schools as basic texts in religious studies. Similarly, his work *The Buddha's Path of Virtue: A Translation of the Dhammapada* (1921), again frequently printed in individual parts, achieved a considerable audience and had a significant influence on generations of pupils for whom it often meant the first introduction to the texts of their own faith. There was also Woodward's popular *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, which as Woodward remarked, sold like 'hot muffins', and which Christmas Humphries described, in 1972, as "the finest anthology of the Pali Canon ever produced"⁵⁹ for its size, and a work that "has lived in the pockets of

⁵⁸ Cone, M "Lexicography, Pali, and Pali Lexicography" p1, citing the preface of Dr Johnson's dictionary.

⁵⁹ Woodward, FL *Some Sayings of the Buddha -according to the Pali Canon* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) Introduction by Christmas Humphries pxi.

thousands of English Buddhists from that day [when first published in 1925] to this.”⁶⁰

Those achievements in themselves were remarkable, however, in a third category of work are Woodward’s editions of Pali texts transliterated into Roman script, and translations of Pali texts into English.

<i>Manual of a Mystic</i> (Yogavacara’s Manual)	1916
<i>The Book of Kindred Sayings</i> (Samyutta-Nikaya) Vol. III	1924
<i>Udana Commentary</i>	1926
<i>Book of Kindred Sayings</i> (Samyutta-Nikaya) Vol. IV	1927
<i>Saratthappakasini</i> Vol.I	1929
<i>Book of Kindred Sayings</i> (Samyutta-Nikaya) VolV	1930
<i>Saratthappakasini</i> Vol.II	1932
<i>Book of Gradual Sayings</i> (Anuguttara-Nikaya) Vol. I	1932
<i>Book of Gradual Sayings</i> (Anuguttara-Nikaya) Vol. II	1933
<i>Minor Anthologies: Vol.II Udana: Verses of Uplift and Itivittaka: As it was said.</i>	1935
<i>Book of Gradual Sayings</i> (Anuguttara-Nikaya) Vol. V	1936
<i>Saratthappakasini</i> Vol.III	1937
<i>Theragata Commentary</i> Vol.I	1940
<i>Theragata Commentary</i> Vol.II	1952
<i>Theragata Commentary</i> Vol.III	1959 ⁶¹

In addition, Woodward edited and rendered into English blank verse Mudaliyar ER Gunaratna’s translation of the first volume of Anguttara Nikaya (*Book of Numerical Sayings*) in 1916, and had edited the translation by AD Jayasundera of the second volume of the Anguttara Nikaya (*Book of Numerical Sayings*) in 1925. However one values Woodward’s contribution to scholarship, it was unquestionably prodigious, and the world of Buddhist scholarship would be significantly the poorer without it.

⁶⁰ Woodward *Some Sayings...* Humphries Introduction, pxx.

⁶¹ Source: *Pali Text Society: List of Issues 1994-95.*

Oliver, I *Buddhism in Britain* (London: Rider, 1979) p42.

A Constellation of Lives

“And I also know,” said Candide, “that we must cultivate our garden.”-Voltaire

From the record of Woodward's Buddhist translations and work on the Pali Concordance, most of Woodward's output occurred while he was resident in Tasmania, though his obsessional preoccupation was almost entirely devoid of any significance for his neighbours in the Rowella region. Theirs was all apples and aspiration, a world of commerce and class where the distinctions of social position were indicated by education, property and means, but also by religious adherence, a factor which obviously had little relevance to Woodward.

The social divisions in such a small community were not entirely rigid, though they were seen to be emphasised by a particular church attendance. Elements of class perception distinguished those adhering to the more fundamental faith of Chapel Methodism (and dour Presbyterianism of the Auld Kirk¹ at nearby Sidmouth), and those adhering to the Anglican Establishment - for despite the non-establishment of religion in Australia, Anglicanism approximated (or rather, attempted to appropriate) its place in English society.

It was a community, then, with some social pretension, and the distinctions of class that approximated religious affiliation were further emphasised by the location of Anglican worship in the home of CB Brady, owner of Waterton Hall, unofficial 'squire' of the district, and Woodward's closest acquaintance in the district. Brady had worked for

¹The Auld Kirk has had a chequered history. It burned in 1900 but was partially restored in 1913. Its use though, declined in the 1920s and it once again became overgrown. It was re-opened and re-dedicated again in 1933. Thus it has remained somewhat peripheral to the central division between non-conformist and conformist, Methodism and Anglicanism. [See Wivel, J. *Sidmouth- West Tamar, Northern Tasmania- Its Origin and Development* (Launceston: Foot & Playstead, 1955)]

Atlas Insurance,² Launceston, and was in an orcharding partnership with the influential Launceston architect, Alexander North until after World War I (when Brady went into partnership with Heyward, an engineer in his previous profession).

When Alexander North accepted the task of remodelling Waterton, which Brady purchased in 1909, he transformed a simple two story bluestone Georgian style home into Edwardian elegance with more than a hint of Tudor, though, in part, the stylistic arches, verandahs and other accretions were to buttress walls in danger of collapse. It was a worthy site for a home of elegance, an elevated position overlooking the Tamar with a small private shingle beach and boat shed. The new home the Brady family moved into in December 1913 also included a chapel that was to be the centre of Anglican worship in the district until Waterton was sold to the Catholic Church in 1949.³

The addition of a chapel may have been influenced by the tastes of North, who made a significant contribution to church architecture in Launceston,⁴ and by Brady's undoubted love of ritual and church music.⁵ The inclusion of a chapel in the house to serve the district may appear, then, to be an altruistic gesture by Brady, but there can be little doubt it also corresponded with Brady's social pretensions. He intuitively understood

²Atlas was later managed by Smithies [See Branagan, JG. *A Great Tasmanian. Frederick Smithies OBE: explorer, mountaineer, photographer*. (Launceston: Regal Press, ND)] who was later to find Brady's body when he died under unusual circumstances in his rooms in Launceston. Brady would have liked to see himself as 'squire' and the term was often applied to him both in jest and with resentment.

³McIntyre p98. A more extensive description of the home and chapel is included in this work. Leila McIntyre was a daughter of CB Brady and she has been, in personal interviews, an invaluable source of information. Waterton Hall has since passed once more into private hands, repeating a pattern of retirees from elsewhere.

⁴See Miley, C. *Beautiful & Useful- The arts and crafts movement of Tasmania* (Launceston: Queen Victoria Museum, 1987) p 54.

the alignment of class and religious affiliation and placed its symbols within his own possession and Waterton Hall at the centre of community focus.

It is hardly surprising that Charles Bothwell Brady (1873-1949) was regarded with mixed feeling in the district, often resented for his assumption of authority as well as his lack of tact and respect for the space of others. He was tall for the times (5'10"-5'11"), vain and rarely without a hat, a fortunate sartorial requirement of the time since it covered his balding pate. He was also, by all accounts an atrocious driver, being both short sighted and impatient, an unfortunate combination, leaving a trail of stories of near misses and vehicular side swipes.⁶ He was a Mason, a necessary social *entrée* of the time, and served for a period, during the Depression, as Warden [Mayor] of the local Beaconsfield Municipality. He was also active in the politics of orcharding being at the forefront of efforts to establish cooperative packing and distribution facilities on the Tamar.⁷

Brady presents a complex and contradictory picture. He served as an ordinary soldier in the artillery during the First World War, which he turned into some reversed snobbery by vocally claiming to be the only ordinary serviceman, not an officer, to appear on the Honour Roll of the Great War in the exclusive Launceston Northern Club.⁸ On his return

⁵He was a trained singer with a high tenor voice who had been closely associated with church music in Melbourne.

⁶According to Leila Brady, his carelessness was a function of having learned to drive late in life, in about 1928. Before that he drove a pony and jinker which had the fortunate habit of attending to the road if the driver's attention was elsewhere, a habit cars did not possess.

⁷*The Examiner* newspaper, Launceston, November 1919. The names of those mentioned in meetings at that time (when Woodward first arrived in Tasmania) held to discuss the issues of cooperation, reads like a 'who's who' of Launceston commerce- Perrin, Shone, Gunn. Brady, though, held a central position in these deliberations.

⁸In 1996 the Club finally went into liquidation.

from war he was delayed in Melbourne by the influenza epidemic sweeping the world and when he returned to Waterton he was met with the death, from influenza, days earlier, of his beloved and only son, Basil. The effect on the family and its dynamics, was profound.

Brady's wife⁹ never overcame her grief and near her own death, years later, remarked, in an expression of Victorian grief, that she was once again to be reunited with her son. She was, as one would expect living with a volatile personality like Brady, a quiet, immensely competent person who ordered the household with an accomplished ease, even when for weeks the family - accompanied by friends, like the Melbourne opera star, Madam Gregor-Wood - would spend time on their motor yacht cruising the Bass Strait and Furneaux group of islands.

It was with the Brady family that Woodward had one of his closest connection in the Rowella district. Each Saturday afternoon he would walk from his home to Waterton across the fields and the Waterton dam. He would spend the afternoon playing the lovely Mason and Hamlin organ near the chapel, his appreciation of organ music obviously deriving from his church background and his days as chapel organist at Sidney Sussex College.¹⁰ He would play all afternoon, a loving amount of Bach, then join the family for a meal.

⁹Brady's wife, Elvina, who was sister to Brady's partner Heyward, illustrates aspects of the religious and class distinctions. She was the daughter of a Methodist minister but remained quiescent in matters of religion in the face of Brady's determination. She dabbled, however, at one time with the marginal views of the British Israelites. Nevertheless, she was a highly intelligent woman who was quick with languages- she took up Italian during World War II in order to facilitate communication with Italian POW's.

¹⁰Venn, JA. *Alumni Cantabrigienses*)

Woodward's "cheery and boisterous"¹¹ nature and delight in play followed Woodward into most areas, including the Saturday evening meal with the Bradys. Being a vegetarian, Woodward would ask veiled questions that 'assumed' no meat formed part of the meal and all participated in this whimsical charade, for while Woodward was vegetarian he was not rigid and accepted the Buddhist injunction to consume what was offered. Food forms a significant part of the many stories that accompany Woodward's life in Rowella. The sharing of food in rural communities, who seem to retain some race memory of famines past, is used as a means of cementing connection as well as a symbol of care and nurture, and the surrounding families with which Woodward was associated would frequently offer him gifts of food and he would often reciprocate.

For years after Woodward came to reside in Rowella, he would receive from his friend EM Hare, tea, at harvest, in lead sealed tin canisters.¹² He was inordinately fond of tea and enjoyed presenting gifts of it to his neighbours. The story is told of his gift of tea to Mrs Day North, daughter-in-law Alexander North. When asked her opinion of the tea, she told Woodward that she much enjoyed it as "it blended very nicely with the Robur."¹³ Woodward was horrified by such desecration but nevertheless enjoyed retelling the tale.

¹¹Croucher, P *A History of Buddhism in Australia 1848-1988* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1989) p22.

¹² Woodward's estate near Galle was a low country estate producing lower grade teas for blending. EM Hare, however, manager of the Galaha Tea Estate Co., near Kandy sent him only quality highland tea, to which Woodward refers in a letter to IB Horner 12 March 1945 IB Horner Collection, Box 14 (FOSL)

¹³Personal interview with Leila McIntyre. Robur was, and still is, a very ordinary tea, which she obviously blended with Woodward's tea to 'spin it out'. That the story gained some currency at Mrs Day North's expense is not surprising. She was a past matron of the Beaconsfield Hospital and was always the first to offer help to those in distress or illness but she was also curious about the affairs of others, and somewhat of a gossip. One of her means of observation was to feed her 'chooks', who

In return, his neighbours would offer him 'treats'. One of the Clark children remembers as a child in short pants taking Woodward Kentish Cherry pies¹⁴ from his mother, and approaching the house with trepidation. By that time Woodward was quite old and his home in need of repair, the gutters laden with the pine needles from the Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*) that were frequently grown as shelter in the early period when orchards were first established. By then the trees were huge and overshadowed the house, darkening the path and adding a touch of terror to his approach; pines seem to gather a sigh and whisper, retaining the voices of conversations past, even when no wind stirs.

He remembers knocking at the door and waiting interminably for the progression of echoed footfall on the bare boards to arrive at the door. Woodward would take the gift and offer his response, "Ah! Your mother will wear golden slippers in Heaven. Or wherever. Wait here." He would wait while Woodward retreated with the pie and returned with a large jar of boiled sweets which he would proffer to the boy with the stern injunction, "Just one!". The boy's escape thereafter was as rapid as good manners would allow. Woodward enjoyed children, but there was also an element of Victorian cruelty that perceived the child's discomfort and was even bemused by it. Nevertheless, his stern exterior generally did not deter the fondness of children for him. He would frequently offer sweets to children at the Rowella store, particularly chocolate coated nuts which

must have been the most obese fowls in the district. Her husband Eric, who like his father, Alexander was prone to eccentricities, was known to work late into the evening by lantern in the orchards. Local theory was that he did so to avoid his wife's incessant opinion. His father, Alexander, who was in an orcharding partnership with CB Brady of "Waterton" once proposed to Brady the importation of camels so the efficacious dung could be placed around the fruit trees.

¹⁴Personal interview- John Clark, son of Claude Clark who was a neighbour and who purchased "Bhatkawa" after Woodward's death in accordance with specific instructions in Woodward's will. The Kentish Cherry is a curious delicacy requiring a mature palate as the cherries cook to a quite tart taste.

he termed 'rabbits eggs', knowing full well this euphemism for their resemblance to the rabbit's ubiquitous pebbled excrement would appeal to the scatological nature of children.

Woodward's fondness for children extended into the homes of his friends to include their children. It is they, who were once children, who are now the carriers of these stories and whose affection for Woodward allows him to reach into the present. Even the shock of some tales illustrates a particular regard. One of the Heyward children tells of walking, as a small boy, beside Woodward on his way from the shop and obviously babbling on so much Woodward, in exasperation, hit him (though obviously not hard) with the fish he had just purchased. When he return home to announce, "Mummy, Mummy, Mr Woody hit me with a fish!" he was greeted with immense mirth but little sympathy. It was unquestionably recognised Woodward would never have been malicious and acted only to stem the ceaseless flow of child chatter.¹⁵ He was viewed by the local people, after all, as a "mystic and a saintly man- with a twinkle in his eye."¹⁶

There is though, in Woodward, as previously observed, just a touch of Victorian cruelty, a Hans Christian Anderson delight in things likely to scare children, unremarkable in his time and only noticeable from the present perspective. As Gay suggests "the portrait of the respectable nineteenth century bourgeois as a stranger to coarseness and addicted to squeamishness takes surfaces for essences."¹⁷ In a delightful piece of

¹⁵Personal interview- Nigel Heyward. I am sure Woodward would agree this tale deserves a place in his story.

¹⁶ McIntyre *Rowella-Kayena* ...p30.

¹⁷ Gay *Cultivation of Hatred* p417.

doggerel¹⁸ he wrote for another of the Heyward children - accompanied by an original Woodward cartoon - he describes a scene of mice ascending and descending the hair of the little girl, a thought, no doubt, intended to induce a childish mixture of revulsion and delight. [see Illustrations]

What is noticeable about the diagram, other than the poem and illustration, is firstly, that it is written on Mahinda College stationery, of which he must have had a stack, and secondly, that he signed himself M.O.B. Woodward often signed himself this way among those who knew him and knew the story that went with it. Favourite stories - and 'family jokes' - have a way of being far more revealing than anyone ever intends, and essential to deciphering any individual or family dynamics. That Woodward shared this story, even with the youngest children, elevates it to the position of a significant personal leitmotif.

Woodward would frequently tell the story of a retailer, a member of the nineteenth century 'shopocracy', who, having achieved his goal of economic excess, attempted to turn his new found status into membership of the Cowes Yacht Club. His name was advanced for consideration and the 'old money', of course, promptly black-balled the upstart. At the next regatta though, he turned up in an enormous vessel with a pennant flying from the mast inscribed "M.O.B.Y.C". His presence caused some consternation as yachting etiquette demanded reciprocal fraternal hospitality. However, when he was queried by a more than agitated Commodore of Cowes about the pennant and the august yachting fraternity it proclaimed, he revealed, with casual defiance, that the pennant stood for, "My Own Bloody Yacht Club".

¹⁸Source: Evelyn Heyward.

It is an odd story, both a statement of defiance and humoured disdain for the absurdity of class snobbery that denies appropriate acknowledgment and value. It is a social statement too, reflecting the rise of the middle class and resistance to its progress in the late nineteenth century which was as relevant to the aspiring middle class of Rowella (and Ceylon) as it would have been in England. That a story like this was greeted with humour and retold repeatedly indicates its resonance within such a community.

However, while there is a middle class contempt of 'establishment', such contempt also harbours an envy and concurrent desire to imitate - a mix of resentment and emulation, much like the Australian response to things British. So the story, while it is an statement of valuation denied, is also a statement of class aspiration, the sort of aspiration felt by people like Brady and others, anxious for 'appropriate' community recognition and acknowledgment.

Like most humour, a story like "My Own Bloody Yacht Club", particularly when constantly repeated and alluded to, is bound to have a significant personal dimension as well, though the sources of the elements of the story, 'valuation denied' and defiance, may be multiple and fragmentary.

As a defiant statement of 'valuation denied', it may well have reflected aspects of the disappointment experienced by Woodward's father, for instance, in not having achieved the ecclesiastic goals to which he aspired. Advancement was then a matter of means or influence, not necessarily ability. The length of his father's curacy in Saham Toney, enduring the brunt of parish duties without suitable acknowledgment or

advancement, would have given rise to an understandable frustration. Even his father's inclined non-conformity and pride in his "Puritan stock",¹⁹ (which may also have hindered promotion) is in itself a statement of defiance, an attitude Woodward certainly, if quietly, assumed in his own life.

There is too, in Woodward's refusal to follow his father's ecclesiastic aspiration to enter 'Holy Orders', an undeniable defiance, though one that obviously cost Woodward personally, for he had to 'fail' his father as he 'failed' his university finals. Despite Woodward's accomplishments, he presents as a person of considerable sensitivity. To 'fail', or to be subject to the adverse judgement of others, seemed to pain him inordinately. His university results, his rejection of his father's aspiration, his despair, and the manner in which he seemed to 'drift' after graduation, all carried an undoubted and emphatic judgement in his early life, particularly in the censorious Victorian world of his upbringing. In such a world of driven behaviour, one's efforts are never quite 'good enough', and the deliberate choice of geographic obscurity, Ceylon or Tasmania, offers respite from scrutiny and comparison. There is no judgement or pressing competition on the periphery.

Woodward chose too, another 'periphery'; he chose 'Work' - and in Victorian parlance the word should always be capitalised - in the area of Pali scholarship that was rejected and undervalued by others, in the same way as he assumed beliefs rejected by others, 'occult' beliefs, which Webb accurately describes as 'rejected knowledge'. These are aspects of marginality, a certain individualistic non-conformity, and however

¹⁹Wijeratne, Dantamarayana, Samara-Wickrama, *A century of Memories* p25.
and also Gunewardene *FL Woodward* p5.

concealed, more than a hint of grandiosity, as the 'M.O.B' tale also tells. The loner and individualist of the nineteenth century, as Ralston Saul suggests, often went or was sent to the corners of the empire, for

There he could give almost free reign to his individual liberty by engaging in a concretely existential life.²⁰

A niche could possibly be found where what would otherwise be dysfunctionality or displacement - the round peg in a square hole syndrome - could be made functional, creative and contributory.

However, all psychological motifs are complex and contradictory in origin and nature. While Woodward's "My Own Bloody Yacht Club" tale may harbour part or all the elements previously alluded to, the story also has the capacity to rise above base origin to also become an optimistic statement of bold intention, a clear encouragement to those about him to live their lives as they choose, with courage and determination, to achieve their own goals and not those of others, to follow their own inclinations and dreams. Much as Woodward himself had obviously endeavoured, in his assertion of Buddhist and Theosophical beliefs, and in his determination to build Mahinda College into a school of the first rank.

The story has carried through the generations and at least one of the Brady children (Leila Brady) tells of how the story animated her own family. Leila Brady was forged in a powerful mould of connection with her own father and her association with Woodward became an unusual contrast and refuge. Even granted Woodward's acknowledged regard for children, the connection with Leila Brady went beyond the obvious link to the Brady family and to her father, CB Brady in particular.

²⁰ Saul, John Ralston *Voltaire's Bastards* p470.

Woodward would meet an afternoon each week for tea and conversation with Brady, and to exchange information; Woodward would swap his English papers for Brady's "Bulletin". They were men of contrast; the abrasive Brady and the phlegmatic Woodward, the public person and the private person; one conventional and the other unconventional, yet like many dyadic connections, it was the contrast that sealed the friendship. Brady would frequently express his good humoured, though real, exasperation with Woodward, who seemed to him to "believe in things no one else would dare believe". Despite Brady's considerable conventionality, he appreciated the intellectual accomplishments of Woodward and his compassionate and accepting nature - a recognition and appreciation of complimentary opposites. Woodward knew Brady's abrasive nature and yet saw beyond the public persona, recognising Brady's turmoil and accepting his vulnerability.

The unusual regard the two men had for one another is depicted by Horner in his *Tasmanian Journey* when "his best friend" took him to meet Woodward and their meeting was played out in Masonic farce. They knocked three times and were answered from within.

'Who is there?'

'Two who stand in Outer Darkness. Who is there?'

'The Prince of Jerusalem.'

'Open your gates that we may enter.'

'By my grace you may enter, strangers who stand in Outer Darkness.'

At this the door was opened and the Prince materialised into a grey haired gentleman, clean shaven, very tanned and clad in flannel overalls.²¹

²¹Horner, AG. *Tasmanian Journey* (Hobart: Cat & Fiddle Press, 1974) p79-81. Horner mentions no names but the persons depicted are clearly Brady and Woodward. Brady though a Mason, according to his daughter Leila Brady, found the ritual childish and was not active. Woodward was a Co-

Horner goes on to describe how the men did not “embark on their usual theological discussion” over the inevitable tea, but drifted from topic to topic covering religion, history and literature. Woodward showed him the palm leaf editions he was transcribing into Roman script and Horner browsed through Woodward’s extensive library of rare works, which now reside in the University of Tasmania Library. He observed the framed ‘Memorial of Christ’s Hospital’ over the mantle piece, with photos of Woodward’s old school and portraits of its most famous sons.

Looking about the large, light room with its well stocked shelves and out through the high windows across the river I envied him the quiet and scholarly contentment of his life.²²

Woodward remained, by choice and inclination, on the periphery, as he obviously had in the pantheon of TS personalities collected in Leadbeater’s²³ *Lives of Alcyone*. Woodward was a perennial observer and quiet, if occasionally mischievous, commentator. He would, for instance, obliquely indicate, to another local friend, sensible to the feelings of all, that “His nibs [Brady] will be delivering the sermon this week.” He knew full well the friend, who found Brady’s overbearing pomposity obnoxious, would avoid the service at all costs.²⁴ It was done though, without disloyalty or denigration, even if accompanied by his mischievous humour.

His relationship with Leila Brady, however, was very different and manifested in inordinate sensitivity. As a young girl she was tall and

Mason, one of the many sub groups of the TS- his silver trowel was left in his will to his Ceylonese friend and namesake, Henry Woodward Amarasuriya.

²²Horner p 81.

²³ Woodward, ‘code’ named ‘Lignus’, never achieves even a minor role in the *Lives* and only appears in the genealogical endnotes. He is always depicted on the periphery.

²⁴It was not so much the content of the sermon which was read from a set lay reader, but the overbearing presence of Brady.

willowy, though competent and athletic; she would have played national competition hockey had she not suffered a shattered cheek bone and facial paralysis, an injury resulting from a rising ball. She refers to her relationship with Woodward with feeling, but also reticence. In particular, she describes her experience, as a young girl, of experiencing intense, recurring 'waking' or lucid dreams where she was in the presence of Woodward who frequently worked on his translations into the early hours.

She would experience herself with him, beside him, though apart from the intensity of the experience, it was remarkable in no other way. There were no deep or significant conversations or events, just simple but intense accompaniment- "I would just fetch and carry, fetch and carry." She found the intensity of these experiences extremely disturbing and oppressive, creating a discomfort that bordered on despair. As a child entering adolescence there may be an explanation in the profound psychic intensity of children in this period, particularly young girls, where the occurrence of poltergeist phenomena, for instance, sometimes accompanies such a period of transition, but deciphering the experience remains difficult.

What is significant is that Leila Brady is not particularly familiar or interested in the paranormal, in 'phenomena' like 'astral travel', which is how the experience presents, and which was one of the many Theosophical beliefs of Woodward. There is mention in a letter to Woodward from Charles Hare (brother of EM Hare) of an "AP" [astral plane] experience Woodward had mentioned in a letter to him in 1946. Woodward had described an "AP" experience with "AB" [Annie Besant, who had been dead over ten years at the time] when she "had her hand on

your shoulder". Hare mentions the experience of an ES [Esoteric Section] acolyte of his acquaintance who described to him a similar, very intense experience with Besant in life, where she placed her hand on the acolyte's shoulder, an "occult attitude of hers". Hare compares the parallel motifs to "imply that your many AP experiences must be genuine."²⁵ The letter indicates Woodward had numerous "AP" experiences and regarded them as significant.

As an accepted phenomena, 'astral travel' was unremarkable in the TS code of practice, particularly as elaborated by Charles Leadbeater, whose 'communication' with the Mahatmas was based on 'astral travel'. That Woodward experienced 'astral' encounters is probable, though any explanation is more appropriately psychological than 'occult'. What is interesting about these experiences is that the content is invariably prosaic. It is the intensity and the 'connectedness' which is important, and which provides similarities with 'mystical' religious experience and 'union'.

Woodward would have recognised Leila Brady's experience as some form of, to him, unremarkable 'astral travel' and that in itself is notable. Leila Brady's intense adolescent psychic perturbation was manifested in a way that was familiar to Woodward, even if she never discussed it with him. In a sense she chose motifs recognisable to Woodward, emphasising the empathetic nature of the relationship. People enter the 'language' of those with whom empathetic communication is significant in much the same way, for instance, those entering Jungian therapy will dream in Jungian symbolism. And this probably goes some way to explaining

²⁵Letter CA Hare to FL Woodward 2 March 1952. [Shield Heritage file]. The ES, Esoteric Section, is the 'secret' inner circle of the TS where 'occult' experience was cultivated.

Woodward's own experiences, employing experiential motifs of connection and relating from within the TS repertoire.

The connection with Woodward was for Leila Brady, as a child, extremely important and undoubtedly intense; it has remained so throughout her life. The content of that early experience was unremarkable, but it contained significant elements of simple service, companionship, and approval. Woodward's apparent 'matter of fact' acceptance of her company in these 'dreams' bestowed a blessing on her presence and existence, which was probably absent from her relationship with her father. Yet she experienced it, significantly, with her father's friend. Brady's experience is complex and undoubtedly erotised, nevertheless it acknowledges the important personal affirmation Woodward gave her.

It was characteristic of Woodward that his connections with people were often intense, observable even in his correspondence, and particularly so in his letters to Caroline Rhys Davids, a correspondence that spanned the period from 1907, according to Woodward, to her death in 1942. Caroline Rhys Davids (1858-1942) was the wife of pioneering orientalist Thomas Rhys Davids, the founder of the Pali Text Society. She was an unusual woman, graduating MA and D Lit from the University College London at a time when the impediments to the education of women were substantial. She married Thomas Rhys Davids when she was 36 and he was 52, in 1894, and sustained a happy marriage that respected each others academic accomplishments and individualistic aspirations. They had two daughters and a son, a startlingly accomplished young man who

joined the air force in the Great War and became an inevitable casualty of the conflict.²⁶

The death of her son Arthur was a turning point in Caroline Rhys Davids' life, and, like many wives and mothers of the victims of war, she turned to spiritualistic practices, which certainly compromised her Buddhism and generated a considerable degree of understandable suspicion among the Buddhist clergy. Her letters to the authorities pleading for information regarding her son make poignant reading and she began attending seances and practiced automatic writing.²⁷ She wrote to the Ven. AP Buddhadatta Thera, also a friend of Woodward's, on the death of her son, describing her new found experiences.

After 7-8 months, he has come back to me by his *iddhi* [miraculous power] as a *devaputta* [god, lit. son of a god] and is now always with me, writing to me by my pen. Other greater older *devas* [gods] are with him and have promised to inspire me when I write.²⁸

Woodward was also distressed by her loss which he read about in the *Buddhist*, and took the unusual step of not only writing to her but composing a poem in the Victorian mode.

I know that all words are useless and that I know nothing of the feelings....Speculation on the Kamma [Karma] of it is useless but I am sure the energy and goodness thus suddenly arrested must bound forward with great results in a quick rebirth with added powers.²⁹

It was a sadness couched in unconvincing optimism, the discomfort buried in mawkish verse.

²⁶ Oliver, I *Buddhism in Britain* p35-37.

²⁷ Revell, A. *A Brief Glory- The Life of Arthur Rhys Davids DSO, MC and Bar*. (London: Wm Kimber, 1984) p206.

²⁸ Gurugé *From the Living Fountains of Buddhism* p 253.

Belli Dura Facies
 The bright sun glowing
 The fair breeze blowing
 The blue smoke flying
 The flashing waters flowing;
 And the tree-tops bowing
 Their fans to the breeze:
 Green crests of the seas
 Which our great ships are ploughing:-
 All the fair face of nature,
 Insensate, unknowing.
 But down over yonder
 The roar and the thunder
 The brave men lying,
 The groans of the dying;
 The stout limbs reft asunder.
 And far a way in the island home
 The women are sighing
 For those who will never come-
 For those they will never see more:
 Ah! The tears and the broken hearts
 For those they will never see more.³⁰

Caroline Rhys Davids was unconvinced. The last line of the poem was dramatically underlined by her, with two large question marks along side. She would see her son again.

The correspondence thereafter with Woodward dwelt frequently on the occult and reveals many of Woodward's views and beliefs. He took seriously her interest in spiritualism, the 'messages' from 'the other side' and travel on the astral plane.

I travel consciously always.... I generally go to India or Ceylon, but sometimes to England (where my parents...seem to have a sort of family resthouse where we children often meet in sleep). I also find that sometimes I go to sleep in the next world and have a

²⁹ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 10 June 1918. (FOSL)

³⁰ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 10 June 1918. (FOSL). Woodward obviously felt the poem special and had it published much later in the *Mahinda College Magazine*.

second life (on a still more interior plane so it seems) in a very radiant world.”³¹

Woodward placed great importance on “the vision in sleep!”³² but he never really got “out till 3am”.³³ Occasionally these sleep experiences involved Rhys Davids.

some months ago I was with you in a sort of Museum like building where you were hard at work- and earlier this month again I took over Mr Hare to your wigwam and spent some time. I wonder how much of it you remember? I particularly remember the large picture gallery- oil paintings of people (in gilt frames) full size - but some frames were empty. I gathered these were of people connected with you but that the empty frames meant that they had again taken birth here.³⁴

Caroline Rhys Davids, along with her valued academic works, produced some less memorable books on the occult, like *More About the Hereafter*. Woodward obviously tried hard to reconcile the differing attributes of the occult Rhys Davids described and those asserted by his Theosophical beliefs. Oddly, it seems, the past lives of Plato ‘channelled’ by Rhys Davids in her book, differed from what Woodward had been told by Annie Besant years before. In Besant’s version Woodward, in a number of incarnations, had been a relative of Plato’s, however, he wrote to Rhys Davids, with charming naïveté, that the “lives in your Plato don’t seem to agree with this.”³⁵

In another work *What is your Will* Rhys Davids again asserts views that did not agree with Woodward’s Theosophy. “What you say as to the

³¹ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 15 June 1932. (FOSL)

³² Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 1 April 1932. (FOSL)

³³ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 5 July 1940. (FOSL)

³⁴ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 15 June 1932. (FOSL)

world No.2 (probation or purgatory -mild) or waiting room - is partly familiar to me as I go there regularly in sleep”, he states, and goes on to accept her concept of ‘guardians’, believing that,

the ordinary man’s doppelganger is his guardian - or may be his mother if ‘dead’. In the high degree of Masonry (to which I belong) one is given a deva guardian ...but I am not conscious of hearing or seeing him or her.”³⁶

He goes on, however, to comment on other attributes of this ‘world No.2’ - ‘tribunals’ and ‘watchers’ - with which he was certainly not familiar. He excuses this by helpfully suggesting it was possibly peculiar to the British Isles, and asserting his usual solution to dilemmas by simply affirming his own direction. “Where do I come in not being resident of the Brit. Isles. But I make my own clothes!”³⁷

Woodward continues an almost naïve acceptance and interest in Rhys Davids’ occult experiments and predictions. In 1938³⁸ she offers him the prediction that war would be avoided, which greatly assured and relieved Woodward, but when war eventuated nevertheless, she informed Woodward of some extraordinary predictions. The war would be over quickly and, moreover, Hitler was, in fact, already dead, his absence disguised by the use of substitutes or ‘dummies’. This was, for Woodward, “comfortable news about Hitler, which is no doubt reliable from what you say and will, I hope, have been supported by other

³⁵ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 5 July 1940. (FOSL). These purported incarnations are recorded in *The Lives of Alcyone* but not in *Man: Whence How and Whither*, as far as I can ascertain.

³⁶ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 7 September 1937. (FOSL). Woodward is disarmingly frank about what he has and has not personally experienced.

³⁷ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 7 September 1937. (FOSL).

³⁸ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 8 October 1938. (FOSL).

sources- from those in touch with the next world”.³⁹ He obviously harbours a grain of doubt and requires a second opinion.

His faith in matters occult was generally boundless, extending into daily life. He loved working in his garden and wrote about the golden chrysanthemums that bloomed out of season for him, and the violets, wallflowers and snow drops - “each stalk having 8 blooms”. He attributed this profusion to his careful attendance to the soil, copious liquid food in the form of kitchen soap suds and scraps, and “to the devas which live in my forest all round.”

Last March a snapshot of me at work in the garden developed a large deva standing watching- It was about 10 feet high. They don't like my cats which kill the rabbits and furry things- also birds.⁴⁰

It appears quite an unusual menagerie inhabited Woodward's space, including a comparatively prosaic congregation of semi feral cats, that he fed daily for years, till, mysteriously they disappeared some time before he died. As Woodward expressed it in the Victorian cliché, “God's finger touched them as they slept”, reckoning after 30 odd years, that he had done enough for the beasts of the fields, and he was left with one old tom, one eyed and three legged, who happily ate the rations of the rest. He maintained a great fondness for animals and, like his human friends, they were endowed with nicknames.⁴¹ As in the story he wrote of his time in Ceylon, he described the animals of his surroundings in

³⁹ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 12 September 1940. (FOSL)

⁴⁰ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 9 September 1935. (FOSL)

⁴¹ Galappatthy, S. “Woodward Lover of Nature” *Ceylon Daily News* 27/5/85.

affectionate detail and affirmed continually, his belief in *dhammena jivitum*, living according to Nature.⁴²

The intensity and affection of Woodward for his surroundings extended to include most things living that either grew silently about him or wandered into his domain, children included. While he was never a passionate proselytiser, he often sought, obliquely, to influence, in conversation and the discussion, the values young people of the area took into the world. The tenor of his influence is discernible in the books he gave as presents and which display Woodward's interests and taste, attuned to each recipient.

To Leila Brady, the serious, intelligent and sensitive young girl, he gave *Karma and Other Stories*, a volume by Lafcadio Hearn, a famous western orientalist who resided in Japan (a person not unlike Woodward himself). The book contains both short stories, pageants of serious Victorian morality and upright living, and prophetic pronouncements on the future position of Asia in the world by the end of the twentieth century. It is a potpourri of intellectual exploration that obviously took the intellect of the young girl seriously at a time when such was not fashionable. To another young neighbour, an intensely serious and uncertain young man, living in the shadow of his able older brother, he gave a copy of *1066 and All That*, annotated with Woodward's own humorous embellishments - a gift of humour and absurdity to heal self seriousness.

Most people who have had any connection with Woodward allude to the uniqueness of the experience. Mr Justice Butler,⁴³ recently of the Family

⁴² Woodward FL "At the Foot of a Tree" in *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon and other papers* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1914) p45f.

Court, recalls, as a young man, carrying a gun past Woodward's property on his way to shoot rabbits. Woodward stopped and questioned the young man, politely, kindly, about why he went shooting and what pleasure killing gave him. He listened attentively to the boy's explanation and response. There was no censoriousness in his approach, though the lad was in no doubt that Woodward wished him to understand and accept that killing animals, even if for food, was unacceptable. His approach is very like the form of discourse frequently conducted by the Buddha in the scriptures edited and translated by Woodward - a 'Socratic' presentation of issues before the boy for his attention and consideration, not an attempt to preach or convert overtly. Despite the apparent casualness of the encounter, the young man was awed and impressed by the experience and it is significant that Butler still retains in trust a small alabaster Buddha figure left from Woodward's estate and retained by his father whose legal firm handled Woodward's affairs.⁴⁴

The intensity of these encounters was repeated elsewhere in Woodward's connection with community and underlines this important aspect of Woodward's character. Woodward established a friendship with the Harris family, owners of the Rowella store, that went beyond the usual commercial arrangement. They would get him his special requirements of

⁴³The Butler family is another of the extensive Tasmanian 'families', in this case one with long association with the law- Justice Butler's father was with the law firm that handled Woodward's affairs (before he was called to the bench). Another, Hobart based part of the family were related to CEW Bean, the Australian war historian, whose brother was a friend of Woodward's and a fellow Theosophist. The Butler family was one of the many 'influential' Launceston families that would holiday on the Tamar, in the Rowella area.

⁴⁴The matter of the figurine is an interesting one. It had remained in the solicitor's strong room after Woodward's death and was removed only when there was no claimant. Nevertheless, Butler has a profound sense of a self imposed trust with regard to the alabaster Buddha, that it should eventually go to a person or institution of whom Woodward would have approved.

herrings in tomato sauce, tinned kippers⁴⁵ and pipe tobacco (until he gave up)⁴⁶ and he had a special friendship with Freda Harris, the adopted daughter of the owners. Her remembrance is of the constant banter, pranks and practical jokes on the occasion, every second day, when he came for provisions. He would always tease her in some way, by ordering something odd or something inconvenient, kept on the top shelf where it had to be knocked down with a stick.⁴⁷

Again there are stories of sharing food and the jokes at the expense of Woodward's general adherence to vegetarianism - "There's no butter in these biscuits, Mary?" or when she made him soup, "There's no bones in this soup, of course?" In return he would bring her mushrooms he had gathered in a 'Weeties' box on his daily walks, and instruct her in his stern humour to "put them in the pot and fry them as they are". Again, there is something special and warm in the relationship with generous, good natured girl who served behind the counter.

Woodward could be very clear in imposing his view when he felt occasion demanded and he always insisted on calling Freda Harris,⁴⁸ 'Mary'. When asked why, he was emphatic that she should have been called 'Mary'. His insistence is odd and obviously more than the kind of idle whimsy that led him to give nick-names to most of his pupils.

⁴⁵Woodward conveniently did not see fish as 'meat', which was fortunate for he had an inordinate fondness for smoked kippers, which friends of the Brady's would bring him from Melbourne especially.

⁴⁶Gunewardene p75. Gunewardene paints a picture of poverty but Woodward's means were not so meagre. He was certainly frugal and careless of things he regarded as unimportant. He didn't really give up tobacco he just refused to buy Australian tobacco because it was poor quality and expensive and he could see no "sense in smoking inferior brands". His friend Robinson in Durban, SA, however, would send him "1/2lb of the Boer tobacco which most of us here think is the best." [Letter of PW Robinson to FL Woodward 8 March 1952. Shield Heritage- Woodward file]

⁴⁷ Personal interview with Freda Williams. I am grateful for the extensive information and reminiscences provided by Freda Williams.

⁴⁸Personal interview with Freda Williams.

Whether the name derived from Woodward's belief in past lives and connections is unclear, but he clearly viewed her as having a significant, alternate identity, which he regarded as a more 'true' self. This may have been a psychological echo of the displacement the young child had experienced in the unhappy circumstances that led to her adoption by the Harrises or may have been simply Woodward's 'clairvoyant' view of her true self. Whatever the explanation he undoubtedly retained an intense connection with the young woman.

She remembers a time when Woodward came to collect his mail and reached over the counter to take her hand, an unusual action for him.

How are you Mary?" he asked, and then added, "I hope you don't think you'll be having a girl. But the next one will be.

She was greatly surprised at the comment, since she had only had confirmation of her pregnancy that morning. It was certainly not common knowledge, and in those times, not something that was discussed. She was equally surprised at the time the child was born, to hear from her mother that Woodward had come into the shop and asked, "And how's Mary and the new son?" when her mother was not even aware herself that the child had been just born.

It seems apparent Woodward was a "sensitive", able to attune himself to others, to their concerns, needs and aspirations. It was an unusual and exceptional 'gift' which accorded with his interest in the paranormal. He had a strong interest in astrology⁴⁹ and would cast his own, as well as the

⁴⁹Astrology, though not a particularly 'approved' Buddhist practice, was popular in Ceylon. Woodward's interest, however, seems to have more to do with TS influences than the local popular practices.

horoscopes of the neighbours and their children, including the children whose coming he had foreseen.⁵⁰

These experiences certainly intrigued the Harrises about Woodward and, though they always regarded him with great respect, they also saw him as an amiable eccentric, an observation confirmed by his odd dress. Woodward would dress in flannels, his braces pulled over them, and a pyjama jacket over that, if it was cold, a far cry from the immaculate white suits of his Ceylon days. He would wear “pudding cloth”⁵¹ on his head, tied like a turban, with the corners hanging down his back or even a paper bag⁵² on his head for protection in inclement weather. He was even known to sew pillow cases together to make a set of billowing ‘Bombay Bloomers’ in the warmer weather. And sweaters were recycled by being worn backwards if they wore at the front.

The explanation for Woodward’s eccentric behaviour has been attributed to his increasing poverty, though it probably has more to do with his careless disinclination. Woodward is painted by Gunewardene⁵³ as living a “spartan life” on a “meagre income” but in reality his style of life was largely his choice, based on acceptance of *alpecchata*, the doctrine of minimal wants, not something imposed by poverty. Woodward had

⁵⁰Freda Williams has carefully retained these horoscopes of her children - securely at the bank - even though she is not particularly attracted to astrology, and is wary of prognostication. Like most who have had close contact with Woodward, and who have retained mementos, she has retained this as a remembrance.

⁵¹an unbleached thin calico used to tie up Christmas puddings among other things.

⁵²Gunewardene [p75] and repeated in Croucher, has Woodward “often clad in pyjamas, a paper bag for a shirt and a white turban.” His sartorial attire was certainly unusual but the paper bag was just a quick way to cover his head in the rain and was not used as a ‘shirt’. [Source: Freda Williams, Leila McIntyre and Nigel Heyward.]

⁵³Gunewardene p75.

purchased for £1084/19/1, an AMP⁵⁴ annuity of £100 pa in 1936, presumably from the sale of his Ceylon estate. Though inflation after World War II took a toll on the worth of his income of about £1/15/8 pw, this compares favourably with a labourer's wage of about £5pw at the time (though a farm labourer's wage was much less). In other words he had an income equivalent to an Australian aged pension today⁵⁵ and while his means were modest, it was sufficient to meet his needs. It still allowed him to use an E.S & A [English, Scottish & Australian Bank] cheque account, for example, at a time when a cheque account was seen as a sign of means.⁵⁶

He was careful of his financial circumstances, apologising once to Caroline Rhys Davids for being unable to contribute further to the cost of a PTS publication, "as I have only 5/- a day henceforth - having a small annuity to live on". This he recognised would restrict him and would certainly exclude any further travel, but as he added, "Anyway I hate travelling and I don't even leave this place more than once a year."⁵⁷

He was certainly frugal, abstemious, and indifferent to his dress and appearance, but he was far from being simply a distracted eccentric. He knew full well the effect on others of his dress, even if he was totally unconcerned. In a letter in 1949, commenting on changes in fashion, he wrote, "Well, here I go about the roads in pyjamas during the hot weather, and never put on clothes beyond a flannel shirt and bags (with

⁵⁴Source: Shield Heritage, Launceston Solicitors- Woodward's legal file. Woodward lived 16 years after the purchase so he won the better of the arrangement! Croucher suggests Woodward was poorer, receiving a mere £70pa [p22] which may enhance the story but unfortunately belies the facts.

⁵⁵ Australian Aged Pensions are struck at 25% of Average Weekly Earnings.

⁵⁶His cheque book remains in his legal file.

⁵⁷ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 11 July 1937. (FOSL)

patched seat).”⁵⁸ This is hardly unselfconscious eccentricity and illustrates simple disregard for conformity.

There is an edge of defiance in Woodward’s apparently eccentric behaviour, that comes through, for example, the tale of ‘M.O.B.’, but humour is never far away. He undoubtedly enjoyed the effect of his inflated behaviour, though the attitudes that drove it were also in keeping with the TS tendency towards non-conformity in dress, food and other matters. The deeper source, as has been suggested, may lie in ‘reaction formation’ to conforming origins. The important character of ‘reaction formation’ is the mirroring of origin; the conforming constraint and un-freedom of the behaviour of origin continues to trap the individual within the conforming boundaries and un-freedom of the reaction.

The resolution resides in the interstices, the intervening space between the origin and the reaction. Transcending the entrapment of conformity and reaction is the ‘trick’, and one that is difficult to achieve, though Woodward, and people like Wallace and Olcott, who have already been mentioned, seem to have achieved that transcendence. If he had not, Woodward would remain merely an interesting and harmless eccentric non-conformist.

⁵⁸Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 27 January 1949.(FOSL) Emphasis is Woodward’s.

DECIPHERING.

Baconianism.

Certainly Woodward does present in many ways as an eccentric non-conformist adhering to a clutch of values that Brady saw as things no one else believed, Buddhism, Baconianism, Theosophy, astrology, and astral travel, though, of course, "one man's eccentricity is another man's acceptable variation."¹ Eccentricity does not necessarily imply madness or neurosis, though it can often be confused with psychological dysfunction. The genuinely disturbed are frequently unaware of their 'difference', or in paranoid delusion, see others as carrying the 'difference'. The neurotic, on the other hand, tends to perceive 'difference' as an indication of inferiority and worthlessness, as an obstacle to acceptance. Far from being unaware of their 'difference', "eccentrics know they're different and glory in it," often to the considerable frustration of others. An eccentric has a tendency to know "he is right and, far from wanting to change his ways, is likely to wish to convert everyone else to his way of thinking."²

Woodward undoubtedly enjoyed a little eccentric exhibitionism and was convinced of his beliefs, but far from self centred conviction and a desire to convert, Woodward was extremely mindful and intensely sensitive to others. It was a natural and unselfconscious empathy and compassion that his robust Victorian exterior and strong convictions would seem, on occasions, to contradict. It is this empathy for others that distinguishes him from the usual self-centredness of eccentricity. Despite this

¹Weeks, D & James, J *Eccentrics* (London: Weidefeld & Nicholson, 1995) p8.

²Weeks & James p8-9. Because psychology emphasises dysfunction and psychopathology, eccentricity has virtually escaped detection and examination. Weeks and James offer an introductory glimpse into the nature of eccentricity.

important difference, Woodward offered, in his beliefs and convictions, abundant evidence of what one could reasonably characterise as eccentric, in the sense of odd and unusual.

Probably one of the most curious of Woodward's emphatic convictions was Baconianism, the belief that the works of Shakespeare were in fact those of Francis Bacon.³ Baconianism was quite a fashionable belief in the late nineteenth century, peaked in interest about 1910-20, and then became an increasingly marginal belief through to about 1950.⁴ As with many of Woodward's convictions, it formed at a particular stage of his life and altered little thereafter. This is true of many people and oddly, because we expect the contrary, particularly true of people of intellectual ability and intensity.

The expression of Baconian views ranged from a simple belief that Shakespeare, being a low bred actor, could not have possibly produced works of such profound erudition, (which encapsulates all the class snobbery of the time),⁵ through to arcane and occult beliefs of Rosicrucian involvement and secret ciphers contained within the works themselves. This latter view was originally elaborated by Dr Orville W. Owen in 1894 and later by a Mrs Elizabeth Gallup.⁶

³ The controversy really took shape with the publication by Spedding in 1857 of the *Life and Works of Bacon*, followed in 1883 with a work by the appropriately named, Mrs Henry Potts on Bacon's *Promus* and in 1890, her *Francis Bacon and His Secret Society*. The cipher theory was originally generated by Ignatius Donnelly in 1887 in his *The Great Cryptogram, Francis Bacon's Cipher in the So-called Shakespeare Plays*.

⁴ The Bacon Society produced quite a robust magazine from the late nineteenth century until about 1948-9 when it ceased. A simple roneoed *Baconiana Letter* appeared 1951-52 when it again ceased. (Reference: British Library)

⁵ See, Antonio Bacon *V Shakespeare* (London.: Bacon Society, ND, prob. 1920's)
Ellis, W *The Shakespeare Myth and the Stratford Hoax* (London.: Bacon Society, 1937.)

Eagle, RC *Shakespeare and the 'Essay of Love'* (London.: Bacon Society, ND)

⁶ Gallup, EW *The Bi-literal Cypher of Sir Francis Bacon* (London.: Gay & Hancock, 1911)
Owen, OW *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story* (London: Gay & Bird, 1894)

It is difficult today to appreciate the enthusiasm or the controversy that surrounded these beliefs at the time, nor the seriousness with which they were treated in intellectual circles, but the range of those drawn in some way to the view included, John Bright (the Liberal politician), Disraeli, Emerson, Whitman, Mark Twain and Oliver Wendell Holmes.⁷ Even the colonies did not escape. Sir John Alexander Cockburn, Premier of South Australia (1889-1890) and later Agent General for the state in London was President of the Baconian Society at his death.⁸ The gentry too, did not escape inclusion, thought one should always be wary of eccentricity among the 'better' classes of Englishmen. In 1937 the *Baconiana* named as Vice-Presidents of the Baconian Society, Lady Sydenham of Combe and the Dowager, Lady Boyle, all of aristocratic inconsequence.

It was, of course, not simply an intellectual pursuit but a passionate conviction. Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, one time member of parliament and Lord Mayor of London, had printed at his own expense, his work, *Bacon is Shakespeare*⁹ (which Woodward says contains a Roman type cipher¹⁰) and had it placed in every library in the world, according to his obituary.¹¹ It is interesting to note that Durning-Lawrence was a self made man of commerce from modest origins, the archetypal upwardly mobile middle class aspirant of the nineteenth century, as was Mr Frank Woodward, (a namesake but not a relation of FL Woodward) who was a

⁷ *The Bacon Shakespeare Controversy* Leaflet #3 (London.: Bacon Society ND.)

⁸ *The Baconiana* Vol.XX #75 February 1929, p81.

⁹ Durning-Lawrence, E *Bacon is Shakespeare* (London: Gay & Hancock, 1910)

¹⁰ Woodward, FL. *Francis Bacon and the Cipher Story* (Madras: TPH, 1932) p5. I am indebted to John Cooper for the gift of a copy of this work.

¹¹ *Baconiana* 1914, p180.

significant leading light of the Baconian Society, and a successful lace maker from Nottingham.¹²

FL Woodward was attracted to the more elaborate, conspiratorial version of the controversy and, again the proselytising pamphleteer, produced his own work, *Francis Bacon and the Cipher Story*, a reprint of articles he had written earlier in the *Theosophist*¹³ and the *Mahinda College Magazine*. Although he readily owned to his opinions in the classroom, as with much of Woodward's intellectual oddities, he did not seem to allow them to overwhelm the appraisal of Shakespeare's plays or the tasks of teaching.

In this, as with other issues, Woodward was not a particularly original or imaginative thinker, more a collector of marginal views, drawn to advocacy than originality. Woodward's version of the controversy, in common with Gallup and Owen, suggested that Bacon not only was responsible for Shakespeare but also for works by Spencer, Marlowe, Green, Peele, Burton and others, including some of Ben Johnson's work, a prodigious output. The nub of the matter was that Bacon was actually the unacknowledged son of Elizabeth I, denied forever his rightful place as son and heir to the throne and forced to resort to secret encoded messages (ciphers) within the works of Shakespeare and others in order to expose this grave injustice without, of course, exposing himself to the possibility of retribution and death.

The lack of historical knowledge of Shakespeare's life, Bacon's use of ciphers and codes in his diplomatic roles, his dabbling in the occult as

¹² *Baconiana* 1937. He died at nearly eighty in 1937.

¹³ *The Theosophist* August, September and November, 1917. Organ of the *Theosophical Society*, Adyar Madras.

well as his acknowledged intellectual abilities, lend some credence to the theory, but conspiracy always adds more appeal than any facts can manage. It would appear an interest in Woodward without foundation beyond the fact of its general marginality, except for an important Theosophical connection; the TS belief in theosophical progenitors in the form of occult secret societies, including the Rosicrucians, as well as a belief that Bacon was now one of the Masters of the Great White Brotherhood. These facts at least make intelligible, Woodward's fervent belief. And it was fervent.

Did you read lately (in England) of the discovery at S.Alban's of the genealogical coats of arms of the Kings and Queens of England -an illuminated parchment. Attached to Q.Elizabeth's arms are those of Bacon (her elder son)! Of course we Baconians knew this long ago. The Bacon MSS are sure to turn up soon (in charge of the Rosicrucians of old).¹⁴

The idea that Bacon produced a prodigious number of accomplished works in the name of Shakespeare and others, principally as a vehicle for secret ciphers revealing his true maternity and bitterly bewailing his deprivation of the throne, seems extraordinary, even banal, in the face of the sublime works that masked these messages. That the idea attracted such significant attention, obliges some explanation and examination of the revealing psychological motifs. What looms large is the motif of a punishing mother, a 'witch'¹⁵ with a castrating urge towards an unacknowledged son, all of which is secret and contrary to the public persona, and as such may reveal something of Victorian/Edwardian motherhood and its impact on masculinity.

¹⁴ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 30 January 1950. (FOSL)

¹⁵ Woodward frequently referred to Elizabeth I as a 'witch', with some vehemence.

Most Victorian children of the gentry or middle class were raised by servants and nannies, who frequently assumed the primary role of mothering while Mother arrived like some ethereal being at the nursery at nightfall, for obligatory prayers and a goodnight kiss. The remote Victorian mother who left the mothering to servants, (and who wouldn't with eight or more children) easily became an overwhelming picture of saintly 'goodness', an image enforced with male collusion that insisted on portraying women with porcelain fragility and sensitivity, to be worshipped on a pedestal. As Roper and Tosh suggest, the contradictory distortions of femininity, of the 'angel-mother' and 'child-wife', coexisted in male expectation, "and both stood in the way of true companionship",¹⁶ and adequate gender resolution. However, yet another contradiction must be added, for despite the goodly image of vulnerable sensitivity, women were also portrayed as manipulative and powerful, able to win by 'womanly wiles', and thus were potentially threatening.¹⁷

Woodward says little about his mother except to describe her as an adored 'saint' which is stereotypically Victorian. The difficulty, however, with such apparently benign caricatures is that, being caricatures, they are misshapen and unreal, and are held by the male unconscious as simultaneously alluring and threatening - the classic *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. Thus the 'secret' or obverse side of the mother is in fact less than

¹⁶ Roper, M & Tosh, J *Manful Assertions: masculinities since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991) p56. On the nature of nineteenth century morality and sexuality, see also:

Gay, P *The Bourgeois Experience- Victoria to Freud. Volume II The Tender Passion* (Oxford: OUP, 1986) An excellent work in all three volumes.

Comfort, A *The Anxiety Makers* (London: Nelson, 1967) A well researched work on the pattern of nineteenth century sexual anxiety.

Probably the most famous 'wife-child' projection was Ruskin who was purportedly revolted on his wedding night to discover his new wife had pubic hair. The relationship was never consummated and divorce was allowed on those grounds.

¹⁷ Gay, P *The Bourgeois Experience- Victoria to Freud. Volume III The Cultivation of Hatred* (London: HarperCollins, 1994) pp289ff, chapter 4 "The Powerful, Weaker Sex."

benign, even castrating, but this can never be acknowledged about one so obviously 'good'.

This contradiction is apparent in the significant correlation between the benign 'saintly' mother and sons that entered, for example, the celibacy of the Catholic priesthood, or sacrificial careers like teaching, the ministry and social work. Libidinal inclination was strongly repressed, denied or even sublimated to a point of personal asexuality, which moves some way towards explaining the confirmed bachelorhood of Woodward and many of his generation. The corollary of this, of course, is a fairly pronounced misogyny which Woodward, in keeping with his time, frequently revealed.

Viewed this way, Woodward's Baconianism becomes a metaphor of an unconscious, unsettling ambivalence towards femininity projected into, and 'neutralised', by his Baconian beliefs. This is not to suggest his mother was some disguised dragon - she may well have been as nice as he believed. It is simply suggested that these common Victorian contradictions surrounding femininity, wherein all colluded, required a resolution which Baconianism may well have provided, as it obviously did for quite a number of other Victorians and Edwardians.

This 'lifting into life' of internal metaphors, is not an unusual psychological phenomenon, commonplace, but nonetheless significant.

That an emotionally entrenched metaphor assumes a 'recognisable' form merely demonstrates the authority of an internal symbolic world: that it occasionally spills over into the conscious world should not be surprising.¹⁸

¹⁸ Powell, M "The Whitlam Government: Barnard and Whitlam: A Significant Historical Dyad" *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* Vol. 43 No. 2 1997. p191.

Like dreams that may play jokes on meaning - a play on words or images - personal metaphors similarly create unsettling jokes and parodies that live out unconscious symbols. There is in Woodward's Baconianism, an echo of Leadbeater's "Vampire Goddess" in the *Lives of Alcyone*, alluded to earlier, wherein the Victorian terror of devouring or castrating femininity intrudes into narrative, revealing the symbolic force of attitudes that seemed to govern so much of Victorian masculinity.

One can, however, approach Woodward's Baconianism from another direction, though, again, as a 'lived out' metaphor. In this view, the central motif of the metaphor is the cipher, the coded message that provides the 'real' meaning and unravels the 'truth'. No doubt Woodward was familiar with the nineteenth century fascination with Biblical typology and familiar too, with attempts at deciphering biblical texts, like *Revelations*, for portents and adventist possibility, so the preoccupation was hardly novel, and has produced examples¹⁹ down to this day. Woodward was a person who quested with a sincere dedicated endeavour to establish values and decipher meaning beyond the ordinary, so once more the unconscious metaphor is 'lifted into life' assuming a concrete form.

The metaphor can be further extended to include his intense attention to Pali translation. Whatever the conscious attraction to translation, it involves an attempt, once more, to decipher, to establish the key to a language or text, and reveal the underlying meaning. And so the metaphor continues to unfold in other aspects of his endeavours,

¹⁹ Usually these are in some way apocalyptic such as the recent example of Michael Drosnin "The Bible Code" (see review, *Launceston Examiner* 4 July 1997).

demonstrating the persistence of this motif and the intensity of his preoccupation.

While one may see Woodward's beliefs as odd, even occasionally pointless, they nevertheless reside within what Winnicott's realm of *shared illusion*, with sufficient common adherence not to be dismissed as the deluded belief or the behaviour of only a few. Baconianism was a significantly shared belief of its time, though somewhat marginal. At worst it was eccentric but never simply 'mad', since shared illusory experience grants 'normality' to its adherents. Winnicott's concept is a constructive way of viewing belief systems, that avoids the pejorative assumption of dysfunction that is applied to the acceptance of unusual views. Woodward, despite his hermit existence, never narrowed the 'playing field' of his interaction. He kept up a prodigious output of mail both to fellow adherents and sceptics alike, as well as keeping the intellectual company of others in the district, a healthy mix of challenge and assurance.

Winnicott's concept of 'transitional experience' derived from the constant commerce between *Self* and *Other*, gives rise to creative experiences of all types, from 'brilliant' ideas for franchising underwear, right through to religious illumination. This implies the content is not as instructive as the enactment. The content can be banal or bizarre, though 'real' to the adherent, so it is ultimately "...by their fruits shall ye know them."²⁰ The creativity Woodward enjoyed in his life was immense, from the task of making Mahinda into an aesthetically satisfying school of educational significance, to his devotion to Pali translation and evaluation of Buddhist ideas. Despite Theosophical accretions, which he generally managed to

keep to one side, his knowledge of textually based Buddhism, the orientalist's 'playground', was immense, though he rarely elaborated in print, preferring the minutiae of deciphering text and context to commentary.

This is not to say he did not have strong opinions about aspects of the *Tipitaka*; he regarded the *Abhidhamma*,²¹ and particularly the *Abhidhamma Atthakatha* (Commentaries) by Buddhaghosa, for example, as "mostly tripe!", a hardly complimentary view. Woodward's absorption in translation and concordance was an area of great creative concentration, as were his lesser interests of translating poetry into Latin verse or trawling his impressive classical library for 'evidence' of ciphers and esoteric clues. While not necessarily imaginative or original, it was nonetheless highly creative, contributing to a personal resolution that was evident in his life, extending beyond, and more importantly, transcending the actual content or belief.

The active and concentrated engagement in transitional experience creates 'outbursts' of meaning, what Winnicott described as 'immediately perceived reality', of being 'struck' or 'seized' by perceptual illumination. This is frequent in artistic pursuits and has many similarities with the religious experience of being 'seized on' or enraptured. For this reason, it is not difficult to understand many artists' attraction to Zen Buddhism which posits the concept of *satori* or a sudden and essential illumination, that 'solves' dilemmas of meaning.

²⁰ Mathew 7:20.

²¹ The third "basket", or part, of the Canon dealing with Buddhist metaphysics and is particularly popular in Burma and to a lesser extent, Sri Lanka. As with most of the *Tipitaka* there is a vast body of Commentary (*Atthakatha*) on the actual canon, the most renowned being by Buddhaghosa and Dharmapala (not to be confused with the later nationalist figure)

The intuitional illumination of the transitional world often leap-frogs the logic of the literal world and embodies a magical power, conviction and certainty. There is a temptation to see such experience as benign and blissful without appreciating the inherent tension that exists within such encounters. *Illusion* exists as a state of tension between the infant's simultaneous identification and separation from the environment the mother provides. In art or religion, the tension is between the "two poles of aesthetic experience, that of the beautiful, which is separate from us and that of the sublime, which engulfs us".²² This tension between the lure of separation and that of sublime absorption, lies at the heart of what, in religion, is the mystic's dilemma.

The Dilemma of Mysticism.

Transitional experience transforms individuals and objects by symbolic introjection, granting them numinosity. While this field of *illusion* has the capacity to enrich ordinary experience, it is still different in intensity to the expressions of religious ecstasy and enthusiasm, what Maslow termed 'peak' experience, which frequently express a sense of unity and absorption in totality. "Unity- Oneness- this quality is stressed again and again by the great mystics",²³ which would imply a less than healthy regression to infantile incorporation, inflation and loss of reality, a move from *illusion* to delusion. This is the difference between being 'seized' by the ineffable and engulfed by the sublime, which obviously may occur and is why Freud and others viewed intense religious experience as pathological. Expressions of transpersonal experience, however, may be more complex than the language implies.

²²Fuller, P. *Henry Moore- an interpretation* (London: Menthuen, 1993) p47

²³Bridges, H. *American Mysticism- from William James to Zen* (New York: Harper and Row) p3.

Commentators in the west like Knox, Maslow and Laski,²⁴ who frequently begin by focusing on peak or ecstatic experience, quickly show that defining and separating such experience from more generalised transpersonal experience is difficult. Maslow,²⁵ as does Laski, reports that 'peak experiences' are almost universal, distinguishable by their intensity, but of essentially the same origin. There seems little to distinguish them from encounters emanating from transitional experience except for the emphasis on unity and absorption.

Ecstatic experience has always held a particular place in Christian tradition, from St Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*²⁶ through the Protestant enthusiasms of the Shakers, Methodists and Quakers and the glossolalia of both ancient and modern Pentecostals. These altered states of consciousness and ecstatic experience indicate a merging of the *Self* and *Other* rather than an exercise in transitional experience and a new means of integration. While ecstatic merging and absorption figure in the language of mystic experience there are those that approach the unitary aspects with caution.

Teilhard de Chardin clearly wants to distinguish authentic mystical experience from that of merging. His principal distinction is that the sense of 'union' in personal experience, differentiates, rather than absorbs; that there is 'union with alterity'.

²⁴Knox, R.A. *Enthusiasm- a chapter in the history of religion with special reference to the xvii and xviii centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), Maslow, A. *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences* and Laski, M. *Ecstasy- a study of some secular and religious experiences* (New York: Greenwood, 1968), Huxley, A. *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (New York: Harper, 1963). Knox offers a valuable historical overview and description of Christian mystical 'enthusiasm' and the many manifestations of ecstatic experience. Maslow's account shows its origins in the naïveté of the 1960s and confusion with drug experiences, as does Huxley's, while Laski offers an idiosyncratic analysis that grants interesting insights.

²⁵Maslow p22

²⁶Teresa of Avila, St. *Interior Castle* [trans. E.Allison Peers] (New York: Doubleday, 1964)

We can only lose ourselves in God by prolonging the most individual characteristics of beings far beyond themselves: this is the fundamental rule by which we can always distinguish the true mystic from his counterfeits.²⁷

Teilhard intuitively concedes the essential relationship of 'transitional experience' and 'reality', that mystical union, far from implying "some idea of diminution", is used to "mean the strengthening...of the reality.....contained in the most powerful interconnections...of the physical and human world."²⁸

Another Catholic theologian, William Johnson, is also anxious to emphasise that the mystic sense of union does not imply merging, by differentiating absorption from what he describes as 'indwelling'²⁹. The language is paradoxical, as religious language frequently is, but the intention is to differentiate merging/absorption from what they see as authentic mystical experience, a distinction in keeping with the analysis of transitional experience. Nevertheless, there has always been a fascination in all cultures with ecstatic [(Gk) ekstasis- 'standing out'] experience that offers oceanic absorption.

There are certainly many similar expressions within eastern theology with the same reference to marks of strange wonders, powers and miracles, what is termed *siddhis*, as one finds in western culture. What is different is the way such aspects are dismissed as unimportant.

Though [supernormal powers] are within the disciple's reach, he should not commit the mistake of regarding them as desirable; if they arise

²⁷Teilhard de Chardin *Le Milieu Divin* (London: Collins, 1968) p118. Teilhard's italics and emphasis.

²⁸Teilhard de Chardin p 58.

²⁹Johnson, W. *Silent Music* (Glasgow: William Collins & Sons/Fontana, 1974) p 147.

spontaneously, he should look on them with indifference, even disgust.³⁰

This is an odd view from the usual Christian perspective which regards the miracles of Christ as the supreme demonstration of His divinity, and miracles and 'strange wonders' in the world, as a demonstration of His continued intervention in human affairs. In the Buddhist view, they are little more than 'party tricks', though, of course, the laymen love them. Even the ecstatic 'union' with the divine is not seen as of particular importance, but an unintended aspect of the meditative process rather than an end in itself.

...in Zen [Buddhism],.... physical ecstasy is virtually unknown. If anything like this does rear its ugly head, it is promptly crushed..... the whole of Zen training is calculated to counteract anything like ecstasy.³¹

What then, if not an ecstatic 'union with all', is the end of most Buddhist contemplation?³² Philosophy is endless but aphorisms are mercifully brief and often encapsulate an essence. In Zen, spiritual 'progress' is sometimes expressed as having three perceptual stages: in the first, the trees are trees, the rivers, rivers and the mountains, mountains; in the second stage, the trees are rivers, the rivers are mountains and the mountains are trees; in the final stage of enlightenment, the trees are trees, the rivers are rivers and the mountains are mountains.

While the second stage implies union and merging, the emphasis is clearly on the third that transcends union to seize the 'is-ness' or, 'suchness' of

³⁰Sangharakshita *A Survey of Buddhism- its doctrines and methods throughout the ages* (London: Tharpa Publications, 1987) p191. See also Johnson, *Silent Music* p97

³¹Johnson, W. *Silent Music* p73. Johnson, like the Catholic theologian Thomas Merton, was deeply influenced by Buddhist and particularly Zen philosophy and shows a rare understanding.

³² It would be wrong to suggest all Buddhist intention avoids ecstatic experience and absorption.

objects in the world, that enhanced 'reality' Winnicott alludes to as the product of *Illusion*. In this way the 'absorption-in-all' is transcended and the context of ordinary human interaction is affirmed rather than denied. The 'suchness' of objects implies an enhanced perception, such that they retain their uniqueness, yet are linked and connected (as distinct from merged), imbued with meaning and purpose.

There is a similarity to what James³³ described as 'conversion', a process that can be either gradual or sudden, where the individual moves from a feeling of division, inferiority and unhappiness to a feeling of being unified, consciously right, superior and happy. Sante de Sanctis has described this as "remaking the field of consciousness" to alter the "self's attitude to the world".³⁴ This has a particular resonance in the case of Woodward, whose early 'distress' and subsequent 'creative illness' has the hallmarks of an experience of 'conversion', in his case, quite literally, to a belief in Theosophy. All these descriptions have as their intention the reordering of the *Self's* relationship to the world and with reality, very typical expressions of transitional experience.

The contrary to such a relationship is the figure, both in literature and life, of the *outsider*, whose world is "not rational, not orderly", where what he sees - and he sees "too deep and too much" - is "essentially chaos".³⁵ The *outsider* is the figure of existential angst - Meursault in Camus' *L'Etranger*, Harry Haller in Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, Krebs in Hemingway's *Soldier's Home*, Des Esseintes in Huysmans' *À Rebours*, Kafka's *Metamorphosis* - all exist in a state of disconnection, unable to love

³³James, W. *The Varieties of Religious Experience: a Study in Human Nature; being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902* (London: 1952) p 186.

³⁴Sante de Sanctis *Religious Conversion* (London: 1927) p 66 Quoted in Laski.

³⁵Wilson, C. *The Outsider* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1956) p 15.

because they are unable to evoke intimacy; unable to tolerate the company of others, they choose isolation and live in the shadow of madness or in a meaninglessness fugue of etiolated senses.

Though there appear to be superficial similarities, Woodward is no *outsider*. He was no doubt an isolate, but he sustained intense human connections and elicited immense affection. Far from being a 'meaninglessness fugue', his life was connected and meaningful, richly inhabited, even by *devas*, and sustained by intense human contact, even when he slept. For all the information one has about Woodward's life in Rowella, there is little in the way of the 'events' that power an historian's narrative; there are incidents, anecdotes, much play and humour but little else, and yet one is left with a sense of an immensely lived life, even a touch of excitement. That he was seen by some as 'a bit of a mystic' in that double-edged way Australian humour mixes admiration with ridicule, is probably more accurate than intended.

Woodward was, I believe, a true mystic, and while that may be a concept difficult to define, Winnicott's analysis points the direction and aspects of Buddhist experience fills in the detail. Woodward's creative engagement and endeavours, even the beliefs he held, sustained an intense and joyous engagement with the world of enhanced reality, which is a truer sign of the mystic, than the absorbed ecstatic. However, there are further attributes of the mystic that require amplification.

The Mysticism of Woodward.

The implied engagement and 'play' of transitional experience excite an expectation of the world, teaching how it is to be perceived. All perception, visual or intellectual, is learned. As Constable observed, "The art of seeing nature is a thing as much acquired as the art of reading

Egyptian hieroglyphs.”³⁶ *Illusion* is learning to see and learning to see is learning what to expect.

.....when the first shock [of Impressionism] had worn off, people learned to read them. And having learned this language they went into the fields and woods....and found to their delight that the visible world could after all be seen in terms of these bright patches and dabs of paint....art had taught them to see.³⁷

The world Woodward had learned to perceive was richly mysterious, full of many layered meaning and connections that he had learned to decipher over a lifetime, a perception that spilled into the literal world of sight, where what he saw was full of interest, colour, and content. Even his beliefs, though marginal, were sufficiently shared and affirmed to deny dismissal as ‘mad’ or simply eccentric. Even those who were sceptical, were stayed in their opinion by the qualities of the man that, as Pearce suggested, stopped them characterising him as a crank. Whatever his beliefs or their origin, it produced in him a resolution that flowed over into his relations with others, endowing each with a sense, in knowing him, of singular and special blessing.

The invitation to engage in the arena of transitional experience is an invitation to live creatively, to make living an art; “it is the old familiar aesthetic experience; art giving order and logic to chaos”.³⁸ The nature of this creative interaction with the world of objects, that Winnicott adumbrated, is expressed by Daisetz Suzuki, the Buddhist scholar, in a way that may have sprung from a text on object relations, from a Kohut or

³⁶Gombrich, EH. *Art and Illusion* (London: Phaidon, 1968) p. 12.

³⁷Gombrich *Art and Illusion* p. 275.

³⁸Wilson *The Outsider* p. 23.

Winnicott - "The flower, however, is unconscious of itself. It is I who awaken it from the unconscious."³⁹

While ecstatic enthusiasm moves the transitional experience towards a life denying absorption, the emphasis on 'in the world' enactment in much of Buddhist mysticism steers it from this danger. The comment by Paul Eluard, the French poet, that there *is* another world but it is this one, could have been a Buddhist aphorism. While Johnson claims that 'in the world' enactment is also the outgrowth of western Christian mysticism, it has tended to be diverted by signs and wonders, by enthusiasm and ecstatic absorption, though this is not to deny many have successfully taken their mystical experience into the world.

The 'in the world' aspect of some Buddhist mysticism is most amply illustrated in the well known Buddhist 'Ox herding' pictures⁴⁰ which depict a man in search of an ox, an allegory for disciplining the mind and achieving enlightenment. The succession of drawings show him finding footprints, then the ox itself, then capturing, taming and riding the ox. The culminating eighth picture is the empty circle, where no-thing remains, nothingness, void, in Sanskrit, *sunyata*- "*Whip, rope, person and bull- all merge in No-thing*".⁴¹ This concept of enlightenment is an odd one to the western mind being apparently nihilistic, yet, as in most religious expressions of any significance, it presents as a paradox, wherein void is filled with content, where the nothing is all, which echoes the mystic anthem of either east or west, of unity and oneness. It is a

³⁹Suzuki, DT., Fromm, E., & De Martino, R. *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (London: Souverir Press, 1974) p. 12.

⁴⁰Reps, P. *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1957) pp. 135ff.

⁴¹Reps *Zen Flesh*...p145.

state of consciousness beyond subject and object in which it is impossible to make a statement or a judgement about anything. This isundifferentiated or non-discriminating consciousness....⁴²

The unresolved nature of the characteristic 'peak' or ecstatic experience with its oceanic flavour, possibly explains the emergence in twelfth century China of two additional drawings. [see Illustrations]

The first depicts 'Reaching the Source' of perception, of detachment, of seeing things as they are.

The water is emerald, the mountain is indigo, and I see that which is creating and that which is destroying.⁴³

The second depicts the now 'enlightened' old man 'In the World', returning to the market place to "save all sentient beings."⁴⁴ This is the essential quality of compassion. However oceanic or ecstatic the experience, it is of little use if it cannot be lived out and enacted within the literal world, and enacted with compassion.

I go to the market place with my wine bottle and return with my staff. I visit the wine shop and the market, and everyone I look upon becomes enlightened.⁴⁵

The nature of this enactment 'in the world' has a number of notable features. It is not simply a descent from the mountain of peak experience and ecstatic merging (where the trees are rivers, the rivers mountains etc.) to the way things were. In enactment within the world, the return to the market place, objects resume their proportion but with significant differences. The 'is-ness' of things is intense; the water is not just green,

⁴²Johnson, *Silent Music* p81. Some care needs to be applied to the term *Sunyata* as it has many interpretations in the various Mahayana schools, some quite contradictory.

⁴³Reps *Zen Flesh...* p146.

⁴⁴Johnson p81. This is the "Bodhisattva vow" of Mahayana Buddhism that places the choice on those that seek enlightenment to forego entry into a nivanic state in order to assist others.

⁴⁵Reps *Zen Flesh...* p147.

it is emerald and the mountains are not just blue, they are indigo. As well there remains a sense of intense connection; each thing, each person 'becomes enlightened' - as Suzuki says, "It is I who awaken it from the unconscious" - endowing the world with numinosity, and a luminous affirmation. And while it is difficult to define, there is always a hint of humour, a feature of religious experience that emanates from the transitional environment. Seriousness is almost invariably a sign of nomist religion with all the dangers than flow from its literalist tendencies.

Some days I will say yes, and then odd days
It seems that things say yes to me.
And stranger still, there are those times
When I become a yes.⁴⁶

The *ordinariness* of the world is endowed with an epiphany of perception granting meaning and purpose, though that does not necessarily impact on the casual observer. The old man in the market place, like Woodward, is indistinguishable from anyone else; his enlightenment does not make him glow in the dark. The element of *ordinariness* is paradoxically, extraordinary, in that it has meaning and connection. This is the particular contribution of some aspects of Buddhism to amplifying transitional experience. It is not the peak or oceanic experience that marks the most important feature of transitional experience, but the experience of resolution that transcends the oceanic and makes the ordinary world of sense experience and reality, extraordinary.

The great lessons from the mystics.....[are] that the sacred is *in* the ordinary, that it is to be found in one's daily life, in one's neighbours, friends and family, in one's back yard.....⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Hart, Kevin, "The Calm" from *New and Selected Poems* (Sydney: Angus & Robinson/Harper Collins, 1995)

The nature of this extraordinary ordinariness is difficult to draw, though it is discernible in a person like Woodward walking each day to collect his mail or to buy his milk and eggs, passing each person in conversation, engaging in humour, that leaves each somehow more buoyed. The corollary of ordinariness is unselfconscious simplicity, a quality one finds in Woodward and a characteristic, generally, of the mystic. He listened with an open heart to the frequently odd ideas of Caroline Rhys Davids, as he generally did with others, listening to what they had to say without judgement, though that did not prevent him being scathing in private. He approached others with simple acceptance, with simplicity, a quality much derided today. However, "real simplicity, so far from being foolish, is almost sublime". The nature of true simplicity is "an uprightness of soul which prevents self consciousness". In such a person,

the soul is not overwhelmed by externals, so as to be unable to reflect, nor yet given up to the refinements which self-consciousness induces. That soul which looks where it is going without losing time arguing over every step, or looking back perpetually, possesses true simplicity. Such simplicity is indeed a great treasure. How shall we attain it? I would give all I possess for it.⁴⁸

Simplicity is a quality like poetic language, a lyricism which is the attribute of all things emanating from transitional experience.

And again my inmost life rushes louder,
as if it moved now between steeper banks.
Objects become ever more related to me,
and all pictures ever more perused.
I feel myself more trusting in the nameless:

⁴⁷Maslow p x. (Preface). I am loath to use Maslow as an authority but in this instance his description is apt.

⁴⁸ Fenelon, 17th century Archbishop of Cambrai, cited in Huxley, *A The Perennial Philosophy* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1980) p130-131. Also cited in Symington, J&N. *The Clinical Thinking of Wilfred Bion* (London: Routledge, 1996) p23.

with my senses, as with birds, I reach
 into the windy heavens from the oak,
 and into the small ponds' broken off day
 my feeling sinks, as if it stood on fishes.⁴⁹

In our societal rush for stars and startling personalities, we ignore the simple resonance of goodly lived lives, the *ordinariness* and inconspicuous living. Woodward inhabited a bountiful ordinariness, lived in the world. He prided himself on being a natural hermit but he never contemplated 'taking the robes' or even becoming a 'forest dweller', a reclusive monk. Despite his reclusive nature he extended himself to people, in the only way a person can - one at a time, inspiring each in some way, to assume their own living.

While his beliefs present as odd, they participated in an identifiable pattern of nineteenth century religious and intellectual exploration, albeit marginal, and were sufficiently shared to refute being dismissed as absurd. More than that, his beliefs proved no barrier to both his interaction and confirmation of others, and may well have freed and enhanced that potential, as Crews has suggested, to be, as he was, a natural mystic.

A Life Resolved

Woodward's world was always a search for understanding, meaning, and compassion wherein his Theosophy and Buddhism were central. He led a dedicated 'spiritual' life, albeit in a fairly secular context. The fact that, consistently, people who knew him, saw and sensed a figure of considerable strength and benign beneficence, even 'saintliness', shows

⁴⁹Rilke, R M. *The Book of Images* [trans. Edward Snow] (NY: North Point Press, Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1995) p91. From the poem entitled "Progress".

that the content of his belief was not nearly as significant as the manner in which it manifested in life, in interaction with others.

To characterise Woodward simply as a harmless eccentric would be to diminish and dismiss the man, for in all his dealings with others there was an undeniable way in which he seemed to positively endow the lives of others. He seemed to transcend the complex origins of his outlook and behaviour, to touch lives, to create epiphanies of experience, unobtrusive yet definite and positive. That aspect endowed his life with a freedom of enactment that would not be possible if his behaviour and beliefs were simply the product of 'reaction formation' and eccentric non-conformity. Like the well known Buddhist analogy of the lotus flower - the origin may be in the unseen mud but it transforms on the surface into something truly astonishing.

There are certain personalities who excite "a creative response in the social environment",⁵⁰ who have an indefinable yet positive 'presence'. In his autobiography, Graham Greene describes his meeting with the art critic Herbert Read, "the most gentle man I have ever known", as an "important event in my life". Greene describes Read as a man

who could come into a room full of people and you wouldn't notice his coming- you noticed only that the whole atmosphere of a discussion had quietly altered, that even the relations of one guest to another had changed. No one any longer would be talking for effect, and when you looked round for an explanation there he was- complete honesty born of complete experience had entered the room and unobtrusively taken a chair.⁵¹

⁵⁰Symington, N. *Narcissism: a New Theory* (London: Karnac Books, 1993) p31.

⁵¹Greene, G. *Ways of Escape* (London: Bodley Head, 1980) p39 I am indebted to Dr. Neville Symington for drawing my attention to this particular reference which appears in Symington's *Narcissism: a New Theory* p34. Given the obvious 'spirituality' of Read (for want of an alternative

Woodward similarly assumed an ‘unobtrusiveness’, a tendency to migrate to the periphery both literally and metaphorically, but then “Genuine virtue is unobtrusive”.⁵² He was also a man of intensity who assumed a place of natural affection in people’s hearts, and like Read, was intensely and simply honest, which was not always the quality desired by others. When he was Principal of Mahinda he would always umpire the cricket match and on one such occasion, an important Mahinda College and Richmond College match, the “majority of our First Eleven secretly wished that our Principal (Mr Woodward) should not arrive ...before the two teams had chosen their umpires”. However, as usual, he was one of the first to arrive “dressed in immaculate white”. The reason for this reluctance was not from lack of regard “but because he was so upright, that he was loath to give a decision against the opposing team, if he was in the slightest doubt”.⁵³ This intensely upright behaviour pervaded the entire school, part of the “Woodwardian Tradition”, encapsulating both Buddhist and British Victorian values of service, duty, tolerance and scrupulous ethical integrity, an influence that persisted decades after he left, inspiring students to approach the highest ideals and standards. While such may appear quaint to modern ears, the values were nevertheless worthy, durable and functional (and possibly deserve revisiting).

Woodward’s non-conformity of behaviour, belief and dress undoubtedly created some mirth in the Rowella district, but what is interesting is the unreserved affection he engendered in everyone I spoke to who knew

expression), it is not surprising he played a significant part in editing the complete works of Carl Jung.

⁵² Storr *Feet of Clay*... p226.

⁵³ Wijeratne et al “The Event of the Year” by A Jayasinghe. reprinted from the *Mahinda Magazine* 1944, p160.

him. And almost all have some 'relic', some memento or other which they have retained, a way of sustaining connection with someone recognisably special. He was a person of sensitivity and intensity but never without humour which is usually a fair sign of sanity.

Once, when Woodward was on one of his daily rambles to gather his milk and a few groceries, he passed Claude Clark, his neighbour, heavily pruning an apple tree in preparation for the insertion of scions or varietal grafts on the tree. Woodward questioned Clark about what he was doing and Clark's response was to explain patiently the normal, accepted practice of grafting. Woodward, however, protested that what he was attempting was "unnatural". He was obviously and genuinely upset by the procedure and they parted with the atmosphere strained. About a week later, however Clark was working once more in that part of the orchard and, coming upon the tree that was the subject of disputation, found, tied neatly to the new grafts, tiny artificial red apples.⁵⁴

This odd piece of humour is interesting for what it reveals. There was no doubt as to Woodward's firmly held views, nor to the genuineness of his distress and probable annoyance. After all he fully accepted a belief in tree *devas*,⁵⁵ and their spirit that inhabited the limbs and bark. Nevertheless he turned the anger and distress within himself into whimsy, dismissing it with humour. He similarly had an encounter with Brady, when Brady killed a snake that had taken up abode with a mate near the Waterton dam where Woodward would frequently walk. Woodward was aware and accepting of the presence of the snakes, as he related in his *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon*, and regarded them as having as much right

⁵⁴Source: John Clark, Claude Clark's son.

⁵⁵ See Woodward *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon*.

as he to be there - "they were my friends". His distress at the demise of one was, again, very genuine and he remonstrated severely with Brady, "You should not have done it!" There was stony silence between the two men for a time, an uncomfortable tension, then Woodward looked at his friend and inquired, "and which one was it, Horace or Percival?" Again he took the seriousness of his own values and subjected them to absurdity and humour. His convictions were never allowed to overwhelm his compassion for people.

His reverence for nature was heartfelt and genuine, as well as another common aspect of his Theosophy. The TS was at the forefront of pioneering efforts in animal welfare - another 'progressive' cause - and Dr Bean, Woodward's friend, fellow Theosophist, and brother of the Australian war historian CEW Bean, was an active correspondent with the Tasmanian newspapers regarding cruelty to animals and needlessly cruel means of trapping.⁵⁶ Woodward similarly assumed a determined view of animal welfare. At the southern end his house, and since cleared, there was an acreage of trees, mainly black wattle and peppermint gums. This he called his "forest", wherein dwelled his *devas*, and each day he would usually spend some time raking the leaves, bark and twigs, ordering the disorder of Australian bush.

It was towards the end of his life, that a fire threatened the "forest" and Woodward remained up most of the night attempting to save the possums and other native animals escaping the flames. It was probably the effects of these exertions which caused the minor stroke that led to his

⁵⁶*Theosophy in Tasmania* Vol.I #2. Edited by Dr J Bean, "Vasanta", Sandy Bay. [State Library-Crowther Collection] p2. This volume not only extensively and affectionately refers to Woodward and a proposed visit to him, but also exhorts members to "confront our consciences with those twin Major Challenges of 'Universal Brotherhood and the Rights of Animals' "

hospitalisation where he suffered the further stroke which took his life on 27 May, 1952. He was cremated⁵⁷ according to the wishes contained in the codicil to his Will,⁵⁸ and his ashes scattered, hopefully on a rose bed, for as he once told his neighbour, Mrs Clark, "Ashes are good for roses. When I am cremated strew my ashes over your roses".⁵⁹

He lived within an order and purpose from which he rarely deviated and which removed from his consideration the usual vexations that divert attention. Far from the entrapment most would sense, within the confines of his routine he was freed to concentrate on what he regarded as essential - his work and translations. He had no need or regard for technology, and lived without radio or lighting beyond his kerosene lamps.

The fact is motor cars and radio have ruined leisure, thought and reading silently and I suppose all serious literature...⁶⁰

A unrepentant anti-modernist, he saw technology as infinitely diverting and contrary to the leisure of living with the quiet musing of one's own company. Far from self centred, it provided a foundation for dealing with others, while many today find their own company intolerable, yet act with considerable self-centredness.

His methodical life and quiet routine is nowhere better illustrated than his habit, while on his daily walks, of collecting odd stones along the road, placing them in his basket among his provisions. His "creed was to

⁵⁷It is incorrectly suggested in the Australian Dictionary of Biography that he was buried at Carr Villa, Launceston, whereas anything other than cremation was probably unthinkable. The wish to be cremated, in a codicil to Woodward's Will, [Shield Heritage] is confirmed by the Carr Villa Crematoria Records.

⁵⁸ Shield Heritage, Launceston- Woodward file.

⁵⁹ Gunewardene, article by Witanachchi, p75.

⁶⁰ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 7 September 1937. (FOSL)

perform a manual task each day”⁶¹ and on his return he would place his stones and pieces of rubble between the Monterey Pines near his house, till over the thirty three years he lived in Rowella, shard upon shard, he built up a series of rubble walls between the trees, “three feet high and running down his drive”.⁶²

When he died and the property passed to the Clarks and the aged (and dangerous) pines were cut down, the rubble between the claws of their roots was spread upon the surface of the road leading to the house. What was painstakingly built up was scattered in a blink of time. *Anicca* - impermanence, change and alteration - one of the central concepts of Buddhism with which Woodward had wrestled, were lived out in his death. What do the efforts of anyone mean if those that come after cannot tread upon them and make with them their own path?

⁶¹Horner p81

⁶²Horner p81.

Uroboros

The secularisation of the late nineteenth century that occurred amidst social upheaval and an emerging, anxious, middle class led to a proliferation of niche belief wherein the Theosophical Society stands as a prototype. While it assumed many of the perennial aspects of religious formation and enthusiasm - Adventism, certainty of truth and cult narratives - it was distinguished by a middle class and intellectual hue that has assumed an even more pronounced attribution in late twentieth century niche belief. Those earlier adherents attracted to the Theosophical Society sought flight from drab scientism and analytic summation and the young today similarly look from their learning to 'quest' for what is unanalysable and unnameable. The goal of this quest is often for some idealised Eden, where the lamb shall lie down with the lion - without anxiety.

Eden is a locus of paradisiacal connection, a state of inflation and omnipotence wherein the *Self* and *Other* are not distinguishable - a state of Nature where humankind is without memory and without *Self* consciousness. It is essentially infantile, a state wherein the maternal *selfobject* is experienced as contiguous with the *Self*, and expulsion from Paradise, with its attendant loneliness, sadness and discontent, is the natural outgrowth of human maturation¹. The residue is a powerful discontent and longing for re-connection with the *Other* for, as Kohut has

¹While the earlier object relations theorists like Winnicott, Fairbairn and Guntrip inclined towards views of maturation as stages in personal development (echoing nineteenth century values of progress and evolution), the Self Psychology of Kohut avoids normative judgements of this kind.

pointed out, “human beings do not normally ‘separate’ from their needed objects”,² and not without anguish.

Central to the story of Eden is a crime, a fundamental violation of such magnitude, it separates humankind from God forever, cast from Paradise. This crime of such enormity reads as a very odd transgression. The crime was to *know*, to distinguish (separate) right and wrong. This is the faculty of critical reasoning that requires separation from what is observed. It is a faculty, too, that separates humankind from other animals, that allows humanity to analyse, to envision, to plan. The consequences are immediate - the first realisation is of ‘nakedness’, of *Self* consciousness, the ability of people to see themselves separate from the surrounding milieu, to ‘stand beside’ themselves, to reflect. And with that comes shame, guilt and remorse. The second consequence is alienation, cast from the harmony of Eden, separated from Nature, and humankind has attempted to re-incorporate and/or re-conquer Nature ever since. Critical reasoning comes at a price, though there is no knowledge without cost, no understanding without loss. That is the human condition, why since Eden, we toil in sorrow.

And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly; I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.³

²Bacal, H. & Newman, K. *Theories of Object Relations- Bridges to Self Psychology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) p 141. Howard Bacal is a Canadian Self Psychologist who trained under Winnicott.

³ *Ecclesiastes 1: 17 & 18*. King James version.

What has emerged out of secular rationalism in the twentieth century *fin de siècle*, is a postmodernist narrative that condemns its perspective to an intellectual *ennui* and nihilistic despair remarkably reflective of the cultural anomie and alienation within which it is embedded, and which both confirms and parodies its own thesis. A reality “at once multiple...and without foundation”⁴ says as much about the perception of the perceiver as about the world perceived. Thus theory, to a degree, becomes biographical⁵, articulating the theoretician as much as the idea. No theory gains hold of the imagination of its times except that it articulates the biographical concerns of its adherents. Our ideas, as Bagehot observed, arise from our “experiencing nature”. The work of Adam Smith, for instance, cannot be grasped “without having some notion of what manner of man he was”,⁶ nor can Freud’s theory of Oedipal antagonism be appreciated without understanding the personal turmoil that arose on the death of his father.

The cultural valorisation of secular rationalism, which has been so much a feature of Western biography, has been entrenched over the past 100 years by mass, secular education and its attendant rationalist ideology, an awesome experiment in social engineering. The dominant rational mode has been met on many historical occasions by reaction and flight towards

⁴Tarnas, R. *The Passion of the Western Mind* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991) p401.

⁵Pedder, J., “Some Biographical Contributions to Analytic Theories” *Free Association* Vol. 10 (London: 1987). Pedder provides insightful discussion of the biographical contribution to individual theory.

⁶Bagehot, W. “Adam Smith as a Person” in *Collected Works of Walter Bagehot* St John-Stevan (ed) cited in

Gay, P. *The Bourgeois Experience- Victoria to Freud* Vol. II *The Tender Passion* (NY: Oxford University Press 1986) p42.

unreason, Woodward being just one example. However, the degree to which rationalist ideology pervades present culture, as a result of mass educational engineering, makes it ripe for reaction, much like 'reaction formation' on a personal level. Once such 'reaction formation' reaches critical mass it presents culturally in an expansion of niche belief that partakes of the irrational, some helpful, most not.

Much 'reaction formation' leaves people within the confines of the reaction, though there are many examples, as discussed, where questing souls transcend simple 'reaction formation' to form resonant solutions and, again, Woodward presents as such a person. Solutions are multiple and endlessly variable - there are no formulas - though Woodward does exhibit clues about the nature of resolution. He indicates this in his response to Caroline Rhys Davids' occult constructs when he suggests, "I make my own clothes",⁷ or when he tells with relish the story of "My Own Bloody Yacht Club". There is a healthy and feisty perversity that rescues him from being simply another 'follower'.

Another aspect of Woodward's resolution resided within his endeavour, for while he was not a particularly original mind, he nevertheless lived his life creatively and with imagination which was sourced within the resonant area of 'transitional experience' that exists in creative tension between the absorption and separation. The continuing creative commerce within the *transitional arena*, the site of *Illusion*, presents the possibility of a

⁷ Letter FL Woodward to C Rhys Davids 7 September 1937 (FOSL)

‘reality’ one can comfortably inhabit, and for ‘reality’ to be ‘real’ implies it makes ‘sense’, that is, it has meaningful connection and coherence.

The life of FL Woodward, lived as it was within the historical currents of his times, assumes a recognisable pattern of endeavour that precludes dismissal as eccentric or particularly out of the ordinary. Woodward came from an educated, middle class background, and despite his acceptance of Buddhism, it was a Buddhism directed by the signposts of his own Victorian psyche and Victorian values of duty, service, and personal exertion.

Whatever the values that led him to assume the reins of Mahinda College, Ceylon, and the “mission” of Buddhist education in the South, he made the educational outreach of the school serve the needs of the people he sought to assist beyond any other agenda he may have held. From a Western historical perspective he made a significant contribution to the dissemination a Buddhist ideology that became central to Sinhala nationalism and the Buddhist Revival. Through the school, he contributed disproportionately to an elite formation that carried this ideology into the heart of Sinhala cultural activism. From a Sinhala Buddhist perspective, the achievement of the man was beyond deeds, though these are acknowledged and admired. In the Sinhala context, he is measured by his promotion of the *Dharma*, by his goodness and service to others, which generated much merit. Thus in Sri Lanka Woodward is, and will continue to be, regarded as ‘historically’ significant.

In the West what makes people ‘historically’ significant is rarely seen in their lived ‘goodness’, or the ‘merit’ of the life, but in the deeds of the

person. In this, a life of patiently translating texts is less than eventful and unlikely to attract the mayhem that is the garnish of Western history. To a degree, though, history is always read with an eye on the lives lived, seeking clues to 'worth', which is usually defined by alignment with cultural values, whether Western or Sinhala. For Woodward the ideals of duty and service were the measure of worth, values today seen as somewhat quaint, yet they were values that set parameters beyond the *Self*, that encompassed others and saw value in societies constructed for the ideals of community. Today community is seen merely as the platform to launch personal ambition, not something to which is owed obligation or commitment. The simple Buddhist truth that discontent is not solved, but caused, through craving and pursuit of self gratification is a self evident absurdity in the face of such determined narcissism.

It is easy when dealing with individuals of accomplishment and recognition to sense the significance of their lives. Their flaws are forgiven or dismissed by historical regard. With Woodward the flaws mingle with the saintly and significant, sense with nonsense, yet he lived a life of quiet contribution and eminent sanity. Whatever the particulars of his beliefs, he transcended the content and organisational adherence to live with affirmation and resonance, to touch the numinous, and endow others with a glimpse of that possibility and experience. However one seeks to define or analyse Woodward, he escapes his historical confines to be far more than any summation.

He left an unusual legacy of unqualified goodness and contribution. Where he had impact of historical significance, it was simply an

unintended by-product of his efforts, not anything imagined or desired, for like Eliot's character in *Middlemarch*,

the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive, for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts, and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs.

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